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# RELIGIOUS SYMBOLISM AND SOCIAL CHANGE:

# THE DRAMA OF HUSAIN

by

Gustav Edward Thaiss

A dissertation presented to the
Graduate School of Arts and Sciences
of Washington University in
partial fulfillment of the
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of Doctor of Philosophy

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# PREFACE

The research upon which this dissertation is based was carried out in Iran between September 1967 and June 1969 under the terms of a research grant and research fellowship from the National Institutes of Mental Health. The conclusions, statements and opinions made in the body of this work as well as in published articles based on this research are those of the author and in no way obligate the United States Public Health Service or its agencies.

The research was carried out in the bazaar of Tehran using the standard techniques of anthropological investigation - interviewing and participant-observation. Supplemental observations and interviews were conducted also in Shiraz and Yazd and used for comparison with the data collected in Tehran. Quotations throughout the text for which there are no source references are translations of my field notes.

In order to guard the privacy of those people who acted as informants during the course of this research and whom I have quoted or mentioned, I have changed all names, occupational affiliations and other identifying criteria. While I initially encountered some difficulties in getting permission from the Iranian government to carry out this research I was eventually permitted to get on with my work with no interference. Given the politically sensitive nature of the bazaar vis-a-vis the Iranian government I would like to thank the various officials of that government for their foresight in allowing this research to proceed unhindered. Perhaps some officials in the government were as wise as one aged bazaar tradesman who commented, during an interview, to his son who had accused me of being an imperialist (ista'amar), "No, leave him alone! He is writing

history. This material is historical material and some day will be important and beneficial to Iran."

Although I have occasionally drawn upon my own material published elsewhere such as my articles, "Religious Symbolism and Social Change: The Drama of Husain" in Scholars, Saints and Sufis, N. Keddie (ed.); and "The Bazaar as a Case Study of Religion and Social Change" in Iran Faces the Seventies, E. Yar-Shater (ed.), most of the material presented here, as well as its underlying framework, is new.

I would like to sincerely offer a very special note of appreciation to my wife Nahid who was untiring in her support and encouragement. Without her this dissertation could not have been written. My children also endured much privation while their father was isolated in his study engaged in the final rite de passage of becoming an anthropologist. To them all, my heartfelt thanks!

A brief comment is necessary concerning the spelling of Persian and Arabic words used in this study. In general I have followed the guidelines of the Near Eastern Center of the University of California at Los Angeles which state that "if the transliteration of the work is entirely or almost entirely from Persian, the author may choose to transliterate consonants as they are pronounced in Persian, without diacritical marks and may transliterate vowels as follows:

| short vowels | long vowels |
|---|---|
| a | ā |
| e | i |
| o | u |

I have tried to be consistent as far as is feasible but apparent inconsistencies may be due to the differences between formal spoken Persian,

informal, colloquial Persian used in the bazaar and the transliteration of formal, written Persian.

# CHAPTER ONE

## INTRODUCTION

A few years ago the United States' Agency for International Development closed its offices in Iran and publicly declared that Iran was no longer an underdeveloped country and was therefore no longer entitled to American economic aid. Shortly thereafter, the U.S. Commerce Department released figures which indicated that, with an average annual growth rate of 11.3% over the last few years Iran has had one of the highest rates of economic growth in the world.

While these economic advances and accompanying social changes have brought great benefit to Iran they have not been without their cost. There are many people in Iran - at various levels of society - who are voicing their concern over the rapid pace of social change and modernization. This concern can be seen most notably in the expressive culture of Iran, such as contemporary Persian literature. Almost all of the writers - in one way or another - attempt to elucidate the various social problems arising out of the changes in the social and economic structure of the country. Among the themes which permeate contemporary writing are: modern woman and her status in society; the clash between traditional ways of thought and styles of life, essentially religiously based, and those of the west; the problems of youth and socialization in a changing society; and the impoverished social and economic conditions of the lower classes and peasants. Each of these themes is worked out by the authors in conformity with their own perceptions of the world. Some deplore the changes and others praise them. Some, like the late Jalal al-i Ahmad in his work Gharbzadegi ("Westernization") are

indignant of the pace of modernization and the deviation from the moral and ethical values of Iran's national traditions and patterns of behavior. Al-i Ahmad was, perhaps, typical of those intellectuals who are against a superstitious and hypocritical clergy.

All of the stresses, tensions, strains, hopes, frustrations, conflicts and feelings of exuberance that usually accompany periods of rapid social change can be discovered in the works of the modern intellectuals. Their positions are frequently ambiguous vacillating between xenophobia, xenophilia, archaism and futurism. Like Gandhi or Tolstoy they often extol the virtues of the peasants and decisively turn their backs on "modernism" while others revert to the values of the Great Traditions of the pre-Islamic and Islamic past of Iran and attempt to resurrect aspects of a forgotten language, earlier styles of music, painting or poetry. Still others adopt a defensive and extreme nationalistic tone or escape into self-exile and perhaps suicide.

The traditional intellectuals such as the ulama and many of their followers who may be called, following Weber, "the self-taught intelligentsia" (1964:126) such as the mass of pious tradesmen who daily study the law and participate in various ritual gatherings such as I discuss in the text, also fear modernization and social change for some of the same as well as different reasons as many of the modern writers and intellectuals. The main difference, perhaps, is the vehicle of their expression. For the most part, the process of sociocultural change and economic development taking place in Iran today is understood by the tradesmen and religious leaders in terms of the Islamic world view - that is, as a working out in everyday life of the theological principle of the dualism or opposition between the forces of good and the forces of evil - between believer and nonbeliever. Thus it can be said that modernization, whatever else it involves, is always a moral

and religious problem for in the creation of new values and meanings there is always an implicit, if not explicit, threat to an existing pattern of values and meanings. The question or problem which this fact raises is, following Geertz (1968:3), "How do men of religious sensibility react when the machinery of faith begins to wear out? What do they do when traditions falter?" More specifically, how do members of a particular status group - the tradesmen of the bazaar of Tehran - articulate their responses to the changes taking place in Iran when there is a disposition to resent certain aspects of these changes? What social and cultural processes influence this particular response when it is theoretically possible for them to choose alternative responses to the changes taking place? This then, is the problem I have sought to investigate in this study.

Gustave von Grunebaum has remarked that "Few culture areas have been subjected to so much and so violent change as that of Islam; [and] none perhaps has so consistently refused to accept the ontological reality of change" (1962:209). The crux of the problem involving modernization and Islam seems to be humanistic; for while an anthropocentric conception is the starting point for the western view of the universe, it is an attitude unknown in classical islam. In Islam, God and not man remains the key figure of the universe, dominating man's political, social, economic and cultural life (see Ahmad 1967). The onslaught of westernization and modernization continues and in the encounter with a theocentric world view intense social discontinuities and psychological strains are created and existing ones exacerbated. From anthropological studies of religion it is well known that all societies face the problem of providing an outlet for the conflicts, antagonisms and frustrations of social living as well as coping with the ultimate problem of meaning facing all human beings. These sociopsychological strains are often expressed in symbolic form in myth and ritual, and it is not unusual to find under conditions of social change that the meanings and interpretations of myths tend to be modified as each generation or particular status groups reinterpret the past in terms of their own current premises or values. It is under such circumstances that we occasionally encounter a symbol which seems to enshrine the major hopes and aspirations of an entire society. In Iran and among the Muslim Shi'a the figure of Husain is such a symbol. Indeed, it has been said that the tragic and dramatic death of Husain "symbolizes fully the ethos of Shi'ism" (Nasr 1966:164).

Of course religion is not the only source of resources allowing individuals to adapt to a given situation. There are other symbolic idioms which function as alternatives and which can be manipulated as strategies in particular situations. Members of segmentary or "acephalous" societies, for example, make explicit use of the genealogical idiom to manipulate their political relations. For my purposes, however, I consider religion primary because Islam is understood by Muslims as a total way of life encompassing every aspect of human life. Therefore other idioms which structure interpersonal relations must, in the final and somewhat ideal analysis, be seen and interpreted in the light of what Islam has had to say on their structure and operation in social life. In other words, one of the issues to be investigated is the extent of the domination of religious rules over all areas of life and the degree of separation of the religious life from other aspects of behavior. In this matter of separation, the relationship of religion and economic life will be of primary importance.

It is a basic assumption of my model that Islam is not, and has never been, a monolithic, static tradition. It has never been one belief system but is rather made up of a great many variations on a common theme. Shi'a Islam in Iran incorporates in one world view both Islamic and Persian elements. Of course, even within Iran there are varieties of this conscious model (to use Levi-Strauss' term) so that, to be even more specific, I am concerned here with the principles and modes of classification of the material and social universe of small traders in a bazaar context.

The available alternatives for behavior are greater today than they have ever been before; nevertheless, choice has always existed in Islamic civilization and is not, obviously, a new phenomenon. Human action has always pressed against the inherent limitations of cultural forms. Theologically speaking, men - honorable and pious men - have, from the very beginnings of Islam pressed against the cultural and ideological form of Islam and have emerged with great works in theology, philosophy, jurisprudence and mysticism which have enriched Islam and opened new paths to follow. Some, of course, were martyred - like al-Hallaj - for their ideological innovations, only to be vindicated by later generations of Muslims. What seems to separate the past from the present is the fact that the theocentric assumptions concerning the universe were rarely, if ever, questioned; whereas today the ideology of man as the center of the universe is increasingly prominent, thereby introducing a profound re-evaluation of belief and patterns of behavior.

It should be clear that individual Muslims and status groups will react in different ways while trying to adapt to the new situation. Individuals will utilize different aspects of the Islamic tradition and will manipulate that tradition and any other available resources to achieve their goals. Individuals, selfishly or otherwise motivated, accord different priorities to some obligations at the expense of others. It is, therefore, not unusual to find under conditions of social change that the meanings and interpretations of myths and symbols tend to be modified as each generation or status group reinterprets these phenomena in terms of their own current premises and values. As Eric Wolf has noted, "Codes are used to activate quite different mechanisms in the

social structure, to play quite different social games" (1964:44). Perhaps the classic statement of such a view is that of Edmund Leach who, in his Political Systems of Highland Burma, discusses religion as almost exclusively an instrumental mechanism in the strugle for power and prestige. In Leach's view the seeking for power is a dominant motive in human affairs and it is therefore to be expected that particular groups in society will have alternative conceptions of historical events to suit their factional purposes. "Myths may be viewed much less as an intellectual precipitate of society than as an idiom in which given groups may communicate to each other both their unity and their disagreements" (Wolf 1964: 78, see also Wolf's own study "The Virgin of Guadalupe: A Mexican National Symbol," 1958, as another example of this same approach). Raymond Firth finds that Tikopia myths are manipulated to serve as instrumental means to justify a course of action. As Firth has so aptly phrased it:

> . . . it can be affirmed that the truth of Tikopia traditions does not consist simply in a recreational filling in of leisure time, in the simple promotion of harmony and unity between members of a society, in a symbolic expression of their ritual, or in a dramatic exposition of the basic principles of their social and natural order. Any and all of these may be operative at a given time. But tradition also offers a personal and small-group resource, a manipulative instrument for defending and enhancing social status. As such it is a very significant part of the organizational mechanisms of the society. This assumes, of course, that status involvement, and the possibility of status enhancement, are important elements - though not necessarily the most important - in man's social behaviour (1968:182-83).

One response of the bazaar tradesmen of Tehran to the dynamics of change is the manipulation of religious symbols and meanings to correspond with their perception of the role of Islam in society. But why religion? Why manipulate the religious idiom for political purposes

when there are other structural idioms available in society? Why do they take, what seems to be, a roundabout symbolic route? The answer to these questions is complex but the following seem to be some of the important factors involved.

Taking a lead from Burridge we might accept the following proposition. ". . . religions are concerned with the truth about power [and] the reverse also holds" a concern with the truth about power is a religious activity. Operationally this concern is expressed in maintaining or challenging the rules which govern the use and control of power" (1969:7). Following Burridge, it can be stated that: "religious activities will change when the assumptions about the nature of power, and hence the rules which govern its use and control, can no longer guarantee the truth of things" (ibid.:7). Because politics too is concerned with power, all religious activities take on political significance. In Islam, this is, in effect, "built-in" since a distinction is not made between the political and the religious as it was in medieval Christianity with its theory of the two powers. In Muslim societies, rulers were expected to possess moral and religious qualities and to implement them in daily decision-making for the benefit of the Muslim community. It was, and is, the rulers' duty to "enjoin the good and prohibit the bad" and official government offices were created in the administration to ensure that the Shari'a was strictly enforced. The concern with change and modernization today is then, ultimately, a concern about the locus of power - at least as perceived by the bazaar tradesmen. To answer the question in the preceding paragraph then, individuals manipulate religion because it is the basic structural idiom governing all aspects of human existence - including the manipulation of power.

The process of social change can also be seen in this framework as essentially a change in the forms, distribution and exercise of power and the struggle to control it. Cohen quotes Bertrand Russell to the effect that

> Power, like energy [in physics] must be regarded as continually passing from any one of its forms into any other, and it should be the business of social science to seek the laws of such transformation (1969:212).

The reader might recall also that Leach made assumptions about power being a basic human motivation which led the Kachin to manipulate the mythical structure to suit their own factional purposes. We might apply these points to our data and conclude that the Islamic tradition is concerned with the truth about power. Politics is also concerned with power. Therefore, status groups or factions which feel relatively deprived (see Talmon 1965:522-537; also Aberle 1965:537-541) such as the bazaar tradesmen, will manipulate religion which they perceive to be the locus of power so that things will turn out to their advantage. This does not mean that those manipulating a religious idiom eschew violence as a means to achieve their ends. Iranian history, as one of only many examples, is replete with attempts of individuals and groups to get their way through violence, most recently in 1963. However, because of the overwhelming physical force at the command of the government, such actions are not usually seen as a viable alternative. Thus, following Aberle and Wallace (1956) the greater the sense of blockage and of the insufficiency of ordinary action, the greater the likelihood that normally hostile and aggressive feelings and acts will be channelled into a seemingly "innocent" culturally constituted defence mechanism such as religion. Aggression which is forbidden overt expression in the social system may be permitted in a

disguised or displaced form (see Gluckman 1965). Thus, we have a second answer to our question.

A third answer to the question of why individuals manipulate religion seems to lie in the very nature of religious beliefs and rituals. Individuals invest religious activity with a great deal of emotion, and many studies (see for example Peacock 1968, 1969; Nash 1968; and of course Geertz 1957) have indicated that emotional performances, especially the manipulation of the narrative form, can propel audiences and performers toward a decision to act. ". . . Indeed, we occasionally hear reports that a dramatic performance has culminated in strikes, riot or revolt" (Peacock 1969:172-173). Emotional behavior is a culturally conditioned trait (see Foster 1948) and as such it lends itself to the manipulation of individuals who need political support in their quest for power and influence. The ulama in Iran are masters in the art of emotional manipulation and when this is combined with a factional stance it often leads to violent encounters with government forces.

The fourth point, and a major one for my analysis, is the fact that symbols are multiplex and multivocal. That is, they stand for many objects, activities, emotions and relationships. Each major symbol in a religious system has a whole range of referents or "meanings," any one of which can be assumed, stressed or exercised in a particular context, depending on the circumstances. Symbols give off signals and numerous messages are being communicated with the sending of those signals. As these are received by the recipient he decodes them on the basis of many factors instantaneously. Some factors such as the social stiuation in which the message is received may predispose him toward a certain interpretation. Other factors such as the tone, rhythm, type of analogies, metaphors and other rhetorical devices

used may add to or detract from a given interpretation or provide a new one. Differing interpretations of the same code are based, of course, on differential socialization so that one is preconditioned to interpret in certain ways to suit particular purposes. Some messages have "political" implications, while the same symbol may also convey a transcendental "religious" meaning. The particular semantic field may also involve a kinship variable with associated emotional overtones. Each of the meanings is loaded with significata - emotional as well as rational - which add further to the "impact" of that symbol on the recipient of the messages. The interpretation of the various messages received initiates neuro-physiological responses which lead toward action of some kind - weeping, shouting, violence, etc.

There must be similar idiomatic forms in all societies which structure how different groups communicate with each other. While different groups in Iranian society and throughout the Shi'a Muslim world make use of the same symbolic code, there are different versions of the same code or perhaps different stances in performance of the same ritual. These differences may signify great disparities in the conflicting claims of the resources and power in society. In other words, following Leach's cogent analysis, it might be said that a common code may be used to communicate to differing social groups both a sense of unity as well as conflict, consensus as well as disagreement. As we shall see, the symbol of Husain has both a transcendental aspect and an instrumental one. In the case of the former, it provides a common code of communication for different levels of sociocultural integration at the national and international level in the Middle East. In the case of the latter, the same symbol - loaded with emotional, social, economic and political significata - provides an idiom

for the communication of conflicting claims over resources and power. Thus, the multivocality of religious symbols provides another reason for the manipulation of the religious sphere in adapting to change.

The fifth factor that would help us to understand why the religious idiom is used as an instrumental mechanism is associated with the nature of the population under study. I am concerned with small traders in an Islamic milieu. This makes it incumbent upon me to take account of the degree to which religion has made pronouncements regarding economic and commercial matters and equally important the degree to which tradesmen in their trading activities utilize the religious idiom in commercial and conflict-resolving situations. In other words, in the Islamic context, what is the relationship between religion and economics?

The literature on the relationship of religion and economics in anthropology is rather scant. Of course, in almost every monograph anthropologists attempt to note the interrelationships of various institutions and that of economics and religion is dutifully cited. Firth, for example, in studying the organization of turmeric manufacture in relation to religious beliefs and ritual, found that particular markings in a house were religious symbols indicating thanksgiving and were an acknowledgment that the turmeric had been successfully produced (1961:24-25). Malinowski noted the relationship of yam production to ritual practices (1922) while Radcliffe-Brown provided detailed documentation on the economic significance of ritual objects (1922). In other words, the religious complex makes use of economic elements, particularly the productive aspect, for ritual and sacred objects. Admittedly some of these are very early studies, but later works are hardly different with very few

exceptions. Anthropologists are either interested in the studies of markets (see, for example, Bohannan and Dalton 1962) or the study of religion (see Lienhardt,1961), but rarely both.

In a review of Markets in Africa, Sidney Mintz also seems to lament this situation. He notes his surprise at the very limited information provided by the authors on the relationship between economic and political and social lines of power.[1] Mintz is distressed that the marketplaces themselves are not discussed as meeting places of conflicting interests, but are seen by the authors merely as bustling, matter-of-fact, harmonious theaters of trade.

> The sociological position of traders in their societies - whether they have a separate social identity, an ideology, a political orientation - hardly comes up as a question (ibid.:182).

Mintz's overall theoretical perspective and concern seemsvery similar to that of Max Weber and is perhaps influenced more directly by Geertz's study of occupational groups in Java and their associated ideologies, religious orientations and "styles of life" (1960).

In the course of this study, I shall discuss what seem to be some of the important variables associating trade or commerce with religion in the Islamic context. Suffice it to say here that religion plays an important role in motivating, guiding, distributing and validating the productive and distributive energies of individuals. It may also structure a given redemptive process in such a way that a distinctive life style emerges, characterizing a particular status group. Such is the case with the bazaar tradesmen of Tehran.

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[1]Review of Markets in Africa, P. Bohannan and G. Dalton (eds.), American Anthropologist, vol. 66, no. 1, February, 1964.

This dissertation is divided into two parts. In the first, I attempt to analyze, in considerable detail, the complex sociocultural realities of the bazaar of Tehran. In the second, I attempt to describe and analyze, again in depth, a ritual event - the commemoration of the drama of Husain - which plays a vital role in creating a sense of unity, mutual trust, and emotional solidarity without which the Shi'a tradesmen of the bazaar might very well lose their sense of identity as a status group. The commemoration of the martyrdom of Husain is, beyond a doubt, the most significant ritual demonstration of collective emotionality in the religious year of the bazaar tradesmen. It is thus not only a fascinating study in its own right, a ritual which has proved intensely moving to many an outside observer (see Peters 1956; Opler 1964), but an important key to our understanding of the world view of the bazaar tradesmen.

The bipartite arrangement of material I have finally decided upon reflects my conviction that the full implications of the ritual drama of Husain can only be appreciated in the context of a rather extensive prior knowledge of the complex socioeconomic attitudes which prevail in the bazaar. Even more decisively, our understanding of the multivocal symbolism of the Husain drama - for example, the subtlety of allusion which allows the religious leaders in the bazaar to utilize the Husain ritual for the evocation of anti-government attitudes and sentiments - is almost entirely dependent on our prior understanding of the tensions which have been introduced into the life of the bazaar by modernizing threats to their traditional socioeconomic and religious attitudes. Understanding of those traditional attitudes, the life style which

accompanies them, and the manner in which they are being threatened by modern developments, will greatly enrich the perception of the continuing contemporary significance of the Husain drama in the lives of the tradesmen of the bazaar of Tehran.

## CHAPTER TWO

## THE BAZAAR AS A MORAL COMMUNITY

### Introduction

The Persian word bazar as used in Iran today has ethical, moral and broadly social overtones in addition to its economic connotations. The bazaar is much more than a marketplace - it is a total social phenomenon (Gurvitch 1963), a social and cultural world nearly complete in itself.[1] The bazaar is a multifaceted entity comprising religious, commercial, political and broadly social elements. Such diversity gives it complexity and importance since bazaaris are able to adapt to various situations by emphasizing one or several of its many facets at any particular time.

The commercial idiom is the raison d'être for the existence of the bazaar and therefore the largest bloc of time and resources is spent in the pursuit of trade and the following of one's profession. Trading has intrinsic value - it is a way of life and not merely one way of gaining a living and thereby surviving. One of my informants quoted a bazaar maxim to the effect that "A bazaari should not see the sun except on Friday over his own house" - a statement reflecting his total involvement in his trading activities and bazaar culture. Geertz has noted a

---

[1]The atmosphere in the traditional milieu of the lower bourgeoisie of a Muslim town has been well described by Ahmed Sefrioui in La boîte à merveilles, Paris 1954, which reflects the author's childhood in his native city of Fez. Similarly, a number of Iranian novelists have characterized the life-style of bazaar tradesmen and merchants. Among the most noteworthy are Afghani's Shohar-i Ahu Khanum, Tehran 1961; and Sadeq Hedayat's Haji Agha, Tehran 1956.

similar phenomenon among the Muslim merchants and shopkeepers of Modjokuto.

> One cannot fully understand the bazaar trader, and so the bazaar economy in general, unless one realizes that trading in and of itself, trading for trading's sake is one of the primary goals of his life. The trader sees trade as a peasant sees agriculture, or as the civil servant sees administration - as the expression of his essential self (1963:44).

Commerce provides the permanent backdrop against which almost all his activities occur. "It is his environment - as much from his perspective, a natural phenomenon as a cultural one - and the whole of his life is shaped by it" (Geertz ibid.:30). This is even more the case when the commercial idiom is an integral aspect of a comprehensive theological system which thereby structures the cognitive orientation towards the world. The whole of the Islamic cosmological system and world view is shaped by a theology emphasizing a transactional view of the world. ". . . the Quran is deeply penetrated by mercantile terms, not merely as illustrative material but in the formulation of some of its main doctrines" (Watt 1961:9).

The occupation of tradesman, then, is used to denote something more than just an economic role. It represents a "style of life" as Weber has phrased it. While there is no absolute correspondence between an occupational role and the behavioral characteristics of those who fill it, nevertheless occupations do "select" differentially. Occupational or status groups not only differ from others in their work experiences and contacts but also in terms of their economic interests, their conceptions of honor and-shame, their orientations toward the world and man and in general the degree of social distance and exclusiveness which these and other characteristics may foster.

The theoretical approach of this study of Muslim tradesmen in a complex society is based on the ideas of Max Weber. In Weber's view, each society is made up of a number of different status groups ranked in accordance with a conception of social honor. These status groups are engaged in efforts to preserve or enhance their present "style of life" by creating and enforcing a degree of social distance through various social mechanisms such as endogamy, and the monopolization of economic opportunities. In order to maintain the style of life required by the status group certain occupational pursuits are preferred and others rejected. It is Weber's belief that if we wish to understand the dynamics of a society we should attempt to understand the processes whereby different status groups are engaged in opposition to others for the purpose of maintaining or enhancing the exclusiveness and distinctiveness of their "styles of life."

Not only does each status group have its own conception of status honor but its very style of life is also a product of its orientation toward the world and man - i.e., a distinctive world view. The members of a status group have a shared cognitive map of the world which results from the individual's existential experiences in society and concomitantly from the religious beliefs and interpretations which he shares with his fellows. Thus the ideas, values and attitudes of a given status group are embedded in the particular social conditions under which the group lives; and the political and social actions of members of these distinct status groups are also an expression of their underlying ethos and ideology. The assumption that operates here is that if different occupational groups have relatively unique conditions that differentiate them from other

occupational groups, they would also develop differing ideologies. Such an assumption is the basic theme of Geertz's book, The Religion of Java, in which he noted that peasants are inclined toward nature worship and magic while Muslim piety was typical of the urban bourgeoisie. The political and military aristocracy, on the other hand, possessed feelings of superiority and developed a religious life in accordance with such a perspective. While Geertz compared three distinct status groups, I have concentrated in this study on one group - the small urban bazaar tradesmen of Tehran, but in developing a sense of their distinctiveness as a status group I have had necessarily to compare them to other status groups in the city of Tehran with whom they are in opposition.

I would like to conclude this brief discussion with a summary of the salient points of Weber's approach:

1. Every society is divided into several social strata that are characterized by the esteem in which they are held, by their monopolistic practices in social and economic life, by a specific style of life, and by a distinctive, more or less articulated world view.

2. As members of a status group, individuals are the product of a social organization. The actions and ideas of individuals may be studied, therefore, as attributes of that social organization.

3. Status groups may be - and frequently are - the fountainhead of moral ideas that shape the conduct and world view of the individuals belonging to them, and that may affect the self-interested actions of large numbers of others. On the other hand, the ideas of a few may provide the basis for the formation of a status group.

4. Such ideas are in the first instance responses to the challenges of the material environment, as, for example, in the case of the Junkers, who had idealized the military way of life in response to the exigencies of eastern European frontier society. However, the world view of a status group is never solely a response to material conditions or a product of economic interest. It is also the product of ideas that are the result of human inspiration in response to a spiritual challenge . . . (Bendix 1962:260).

The Moral Community of the Bazaar

Among the tradesmen there is a strong sense of "we" feeling and emotional investment or identification with the bazaar sub-culture. Merchants and tradesmen share certain behavioral expectations which differ quite markedly from individuals outside the bazaar, particularly office workers and government employees. The bazaar tradesmen perceive the bazaar culture as, in effect, the epitome of the umma muslimiya - the Muslim community. That is, they feel they are participating in a style of life that is enjoined by the teachings of Islam as presented by the Shi'a ulama and in accordance with their understanding of those teachings. They realize that they are not perfect by any means, but they do feel they are at least on the "straight path" while the others outside the bazaar are, for the most part, following a deviant way. They feel driven to organize their lives as a single urgent mission toward salvation, and in this process strive to eliminate distracting sensual joys, plan their trade and their lives in quite systematic and regular patterns, and justify this life style by threats of damnation for those infidels and backsliders who do not follow it.

The bazaar is conceived of as a moral community in the sense that the bazaar tradesmen and religious leaders of the bazaar make a conscious distinction between "we" (the moral community) and "they" (the outsiders). The members of these status groups make continuous judgments of right and wrong which characterize their interactions within the community and with those perceived as outside the system. Such a conception cannot be better seen than in the distinction which my informants made between the major morphological attributes of the city of Tehran.

The Urban Dichotomy: Old City - New City

Through the process of urbanization and social change with its increasing patterns of physical and social mobility, there has emerged in Tehran, as in other Middle Eastern cities as well (see Gulick 1967; Lapidus 1969; Abu Lughod 1961, 1965, 1969; Clarke and Clark 1969; Clarke 1963; English 1966 and Ahrens 1966), a marked distinction between the old city and the new city. As Naraqi (quoted in Sunderland 1968:668) has phrased it:

> Tehran provides a splendid example of a dichotomy in these terms. The city consists of a westernized northern part and an "old fashioned" southern part. The bonds between the inhabitants of these areas grow weaker; the north despises the south, and the south mocks, envies or hates the north. Antagonism between old and new values sometimes takes on the strongest forms: violent outbursts of the old spirit then serve to remind those who govern, of this tribe, which is, so to speak, camping outside the gates of a brand new city.

Physically, the present city is clearly demarcated into two major morphological divisions which have corresponding behavioral and ideological characteristics. The old town is centered around the bazaar with a large population living at high densities and with characteristic demographic features. It is a population generally characterized by low standards of literacy and education, limited emancipation of women, low incomes and a particular type of family expense pattern based on the low incomes and, finally, a particular occupational structure. In contrast to this, the population of the northern part of the city is much smaller in numbers and living at lower densities; while it is characterized by a somewhat different set of demographic attributes and higher rates of education and literacy. The occupational and income structures are different with a consequent pattern of expenditures and demands which suit their different styles of life.

There is a good deal of overt and latent hostility between residents of these two sections of the city. The hostility generally takes the form of criticisms of each others' ideological stances and political affiliations, combined with strongly differentiated attitudes toward development and modernization. The bazaaris, for example, characterize the residents of the north as kāfar ("unbelievers"); bisavād ("illiterate," but in a religious sense of not knowing the Koran and the requirements of its teachings), shahvatparast (literally, "worshippers of lust" a phrase which signifies the perceived sexuality and sinfulness of a modern, basically westernized way of life) and dunyāparast (materialists - literally, "worshippers of the materialism of this world"). Other, more neutral terms are also used to distinguish bazaaris from non-bazaaris, such as āghāyān-i khiabān (literally, "men of the streets") which is used in reference to individuals who work in commercial enterprises outside of the confines of the bazaar and who do not, for the most part, participate in the moral community of the bazaar even though there may be considerable commercial activity between them. Sometimes the words "dar khiabān" ("in the streets") or birun ("outside") are used to further clarify the distinctiveness of the bazaar area from those outside it.

Those who work as office workers, clerks and bureaucrats in private enterprises, the university or government offices are collectively referred to as edari. (This is a term of reproach when used by bazaar tradesmen who, reciprocally, are referred to contemptuously by the edari as bazaari.) To appreciate the significance of the term edari as one of the conceptual opposites which help to articulate this study, it is useful to point out that to most people the municipal and national governmental structures are abstract entities made real only by the daily behavior of

their employees. The 'government' is corrupt, inefficient, arbitrary and oppressive only to the extent that those who compose it are. When customs officials seek or accept bribes from merchants to clear goods or tax officials are bribed by tradesmen, the government is blamed for the moral failure of its employees, and in particular the Shah as the supreme embodiment of the governmental structure.[2] Therefore, government employees, whether guilty of corruption or not, are generally seen in a bad light. Hence, an edari is, by extension, one who is involved in a bureaucratic structure which is perceived to be corrupt and oppressive and which is believed to engage in practices which contravene the principles of Islam.[3] The underlying assumption that operates here is that a government employee is put in a position where it is possible to exercise arbitrary power over other people. It is assumed that anyone in such a position would exploit those circumstances to his own benefit and that of his friends and kinsmen at the expense of the stranger. As Andrew Westwood has commented,

> The official who seeks to apply the abstract law without fear or favor walks a lonely and difficult path toward obscurity. He is offered bribes because it is thought he expects them, and refusal is not often thought commendable honesty. It is thought evidence that he is holding out for a larger bribe or has taken one from another party. Refusal to overlook the law as a political favor brings down the enmity of powerful men usually including his

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[2]A friend was offered, through contacts in the Ministry of Economy, a job overseeing the importation of goods into Iran and determining whether they should be subject to duty or not. Those sponsoring him said they wanted a 75% - 25% split of the graft and bribes which he would receive. They said his 25% would net him no less than 32,000 tomans per month (about $4,000).

[3]It is exceedingly important to remember, however, that every bazaar merchant has some relatives who are edari and he is not adverse to using those ties of kinship, friendship or any other connecting links with edaris in order to achieve whatever goal he seeks.

> superiors. At the minimum, he will find his career impaired; he is likely to find himself transferred "out of harms way"; he may find himself singled out for prosecution on charges of corruption or malfeasance. Finally, he lacks clear moral satisfaction (1965:125).

As one Iranian friend, the son of a bazaar merchant and an employee of a large government agency put it when I questioned him about one of his own rather questionable actions, "It is very honest. Those who have been honest here in this country have not progressed." I do not wish to castigate the edari here, for while there is much about their activities that is negative, there is also much that is positive. I do wish to single out, however, what the bazaaris themselves focus on, namely, the negative aspects of the behavior of government employees as it affects them in their daily interaction with government offices. The situation is changing slowly and the bazaaris recognize this, but the ideological stereotypes lag behind and do not correspond with the reality of a changing system.

The tradesmen and merchants, in referring to themselves, most often use the words kasabeh (tradesman) or, less fequently, tājer (merchant) but they also use the term bazaari, especially when they wish to set themselves apart from the rest of urban society:

informant: Our type is used to the dirt of the bazaar. They can even get any kind of microbe from our blood. Believe me, if they send my blood to be examined, they will find out I am immune to all the diseases. Why? Because the dust from the carpets has filled up our lungs. That is why we don't get sick. Up to now no carpet merchant has ever had TB because they have become immune.

probe: You mentioned "our type" (tip-i mā), what do you mean by that?

informant: Bazaari's type (tip-i bazaari).

Clearly, the tradesmen are proud of being bazaaris, which in their view constitutes a particular type of social group, but they also resent the derogatory manner in which the word is used by many people.

> The government has abandoned us because we are bazaari. . . . When people want to belittle someone or curse him they will say, "Go away, bazaari" (boru bazaari); yet the economy of this country is based on the bazaar.

The negative image of the bazaari to the edari has reference largely to their overly zealous religious behavior which edari informants characterize as fanatik (fanatical, English loan word in Persian) and to what the edaris perceive as their hypocrisy. Although the bazaaris condemn everyone else for not following the Straight Path, they themselves avoid many of the strictures of Islamic injunctions through such practices as kolah shari'[4] and atone for their sense of guilt by giving charity, performing pilgrimages and participating in religious gatherings (hay'ats and rozehs) as we shall see later. I mention the edari view here in order to stress the sense of polarity that exists between these two segments of society. The bazaaris, for their part, see themselves as pious, hard-working, God-fearing men.

Although the bazaar tradesmen may have a rather arithmetical conception of virtue (which can be increased or diminished by specific acts of merit or demerit), they also have an overall conception that one's

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[4]Literally it means putting a hat on the shari'at or Islamic law. The term refers to a practice not uncommon among tradesmen in the bazaar who are religiously oriented and who wish to justify certain behavior on religious grounds. They uphold the letter of the law through clever manipulation and idiosyncratic interpretations of the law, while ignoring the spirit of the law. Such practices are universally condemned by those who see themselves as more pious.

total life can be systematically regulated in accordance with the dominant Islamic injunction to "enjoin the good and prohibit the bad." One of the implications of such a view is that the conduct of each individual within the social space of the bazaar is understood as the concern of all others in the community. For example, informants told me that if someone finds out that his friend has not given his obligatory charity (khoms and zakat) he will go to him and advise him to pay it. I was told that it is the duty of this man to advise his friend and to acquaint others with their mistakes and be an exemplary example of proper behavior. This is done following the Islamic injunction to "command the good and prohibit the bad."

> We have a saying in Islam that "each man is the mirror of his brother and other Muslims." If I see you are doing something wrong I have to come and tell you. It is my duty to order you and guide you to do the things that are good for religion.

## The Asnaf

The social organization of the bazaar is composed of a complex network of dyadic relationships which constitute the locus around which various social groupings are formed. Since the tradesmen are first and foremost businessmen they are interested in developing and consolidating ties with other traders in the bazaar, particularly in their own occupational group. Individuals in a common profession in the bazaar have a strong sense of solidarity which finds one expression in the senf (plural "asnaf).

The term senf is usually translated as "corporation" (Gibb and Bowen 1950 following the French usage) or "guild" (Massignon 1913), although there seems to be evidence from my own research as well as historical studies (Baer 1970; Cahen 1970; Stern 1970) to indicate there is and has been little formal corporate organization to the senf. The semantic problem

associated with the usage of the term senf is a preplexing one. It is used in everyday speech to denote a profession, trade or craft as well as referring to a class of people characterized by a particular life style as we noted earlier. In addition, it is used in reference to an organization similar to what we normally refer to as a guild. That is, a professional organization with a hierarchical framework of officers and members who fulfill such purposes as economically restrictive practices, fiscal, administrative and broadly social functions (Baer 1970:12). The term most often used in contemporary Iran, however, to refer to this organization-like structure is not senf (although the word does seem to be used, at times, as a shorthand form) but rather senf-i ettehadieh ("guild-union"). This latter term denotes a number of asnaf of similar occupational activities (such as goldsmith, silversmith and jewelry-maker) which join together forming a "guild-union." Such organizations are largely a recent innovation of the Iranian government, although there was some precedent in the past for various asnaf to pool resources and membership to finance religious ceremonies and staff religious processions. Most asnaf in Tehran are formed into these "guild-unions" and come under the administrative jurisdiction of either the Chamber of Commerce (otāq-i bāzargāni) or the High Council of Guilds (showrā-yi āli-yi asnāf). The former is largely composed of those professions involved in importing or exporting raw materials or finished products. A numbered card is issued to each registered member which must be shown when application is made for permission to import or export. Without this it is impossible to engage in international trade. The members of this organization are, generally speaking, wealthy merchants (tājer, plural tujjār, which is the Arabic

for large-scale merchant; the Persian term in use is bāzārgān; both terms are used in Iran).[5] Members of the High Council of Guilds, on the other hand, are largely tradesmen (kāseb, kasabeh) and craftsmen or artisans (san'atgar). The High Council of Guilds itself comes under the jurisdiction of the Municipality of Tehran on behalf of the Ministry of the Interior and the cooperation of the Ministry of Labor. While the "guild-unions" are supposed to be free of political involvement, there is a good deal of interference in their affairs by the government. If a leader of a "guild-union" is chosen by the members of that profession who is not to the government's liking, the election is considered null and void and new elections are held. In 1968, during field work, differences had arisen between the High Council of Guilds of Tehran (there is a High Council for each urban center in Iran) and the Iran Novin party (this was the political party ruling Iran and of the Prime Minister - see Binder 1964 for a discussion of political parties in Iran). The members of the guilds, especially Mr. Qabadian, the director of the High Council, blamed the government for setting up government-operated shops, especially those selling Iranian handicrafts, and thus creating competition for the guilds. The Iran Novin party (the party of the Prime Minister, his cabinet and therefore, in effect, the government) charged the High Council of

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[5] In a conversation one day with an informant I was told that a subtle distinction is made between the terms tājer and bāzārgān (both words denoting merchant). The former connotes a relatively conservative person (in all aspects of his life style), whereas the latter term indicates someone who is relatively more "modern." This distinction would seem to be an artifact of language in that the former is Arabic and the latter Persian. Since Reza Shah attempted to "purify" and modernize Persian by purging it of Arabic words which signified traditionalism and a tie-in with the Islamic past (something to be avoided in the highly nationalistic Pahlavi dynasty), it would seem that this distinction follows the modernizing of the language qua world view.

Guilds in turn with collusion and smuggling. In 1969, the City Council and the Mayor of Tehran, despite opposition, dismissed all members of the High Council (although they were elected members), and appointed a new Board of Directors until such time as new elections could take place.

The official functions of the "guild-union" seem to be to consolidate the efforts and activities of the tradesmen and craftsmen vis-à-vis economic matters such as (1) regulating competition, (2) ensuring fair business practices, (3) regulating entry into a profession through examinations and licensing thereby limiting the number of practitioners, (4) ensuring an equitable tax assessment for individuals, (5) facilitating contact with government officials and (6) collecting money from the members for various functions, especially national celebrations such as the 2,500th anniversary of the founding of the Persian Empire, the Shah's coronation, etc. It might be noted that during field work in 1967, the coronation of the Shah was held and members of the various senf-i ettehadieh were coerced into paying for the various decorations throughout the city, especially the triumphal arches (taq-i nosrat). Hambly in discussing the Qajar period notes that in the nineteenth century the

> . . . merchant was an invaluable subject who supplied, when necessary, the loans - voluntary and involuntary - to cover the expenditure of foreign embassies, lavish building programs and the celebration of festivals, as well as to provide for the sinews of war (1964:75).

There have always been continuing conflicts with the government and at various times open hostilities have broken out ostensibly for religious or political reasons, but almost always with an economic catalyst. The political support for Mossadeq in 1953 was due, in good measure, to the dissatisfaction with the poor economic state of the country prior to the

rise of Mossadeq. The merchants and tradesmen, through their professional organizations and associations, were very effective in their support of Mossadeq and their opposition to the Shah. It is clear, therefore, that upon the Shah's return to power following the overthrow of Mossadeq, the government began organizing and controlling the activities and power of the guilds. Some of my informants pointed out the various economic and political sanctions which the government can bring to bear to keep recalcitrant guilds or individuals in line. We have already seen one instance where the government can dismiss elected officials who oppose government policy. Several guilds depend on government quotas for a supply of raw materials such as the bakers (nanvā), butchers (qasābi) and the sellers of tea and sugar (attār, saqqat-foroush). These products are channeled through the head of the "guild-union" (whose election, as I mentioned, is supervised and controlled by the government) and he can withhold, delay or further obstruct the processing of these materials to their retail outlet. In addition, the government can apply other pressures to ensure conformity to its wishes by withholding certain privileges such as granting a license to do business or to import and export goods. Loans from government banks can be denied and pressures exerted to prevent the obtaining of loans from private banks. The former director of one of the government banks told me that the government has various techniques at its disposal to ensure that the policies it desires are carried out. For example, he told me that some tradesmen a few years ago were hoarding goods and manipulating the market and prices to their advantage. Through the money of government-owned banks, competitive goods were imported from Japan and sold at a low price, thereby ruining the hoarding tradesmen. On the other hand, the government favors certain

merchants who are willing to invest in industrial activities. If merchants put up a certain amount of capital, the government, informants related, would grant them interest-free loans or loans at extremely low interest rates. Merchants then, who were willing to risk their capital in the industrial sector had more favorable opportunities than many merchants who used their capital for more traditional forms of investment. Certain asnaf may also get tax benefits. One informant noted, "After Mossadeq's downfall, all asnaf except the goldsmiths, closed down their shops in the bazaar in protest to the return of the Shah. The government then sent police into the bazaar to note who closed and who didn't and that's the reason the government was good to the goldsmiths and probably reduced their taxes" (italics mine. It might be noted that goldsmiths are predominately Jewish and there may well be anti-Jewish feeling in this statement, especially since they are associated in this context with supporting the Shah against Mossadeq, whom the majority of Muslim tradesmen supported).

The government offices, especially the offices of the municipality of Tehran, may find it convenient not to cooperate with the professions and particular individuals in the daily transactions so necessary to facilitate smooth business transactions. Officials increase an already burdensome red tape and create difficulties in getting even the simplest action completed.

> I went to get permission from city hall. My house is in the south of the city, but they sent me to another office which is in the north. They didn't care that I don't have facilities to go back and forth or that I am a kāseb (tradesman) who has to go to work and follow my business and make money to spend for this country. These offices are only open half a day [7:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. in the summer] and by the time I got there half of my day

> was wasted. Then I went to see a man who signed my papers, who then sent them to another office. I went to this office and the man said I had to go and come back the next day. They didn't care about my work and my problems.

There is no doubt, then, that the government may willfully put obstacles in the way of members of the asnaf in order to exert control over them. Such control may be for purposes of economic development such as pressuring the merchants to invest in industrial and primary production and abandon, to some extent, their functions as middlemen. Or, pressures may be brought to bear to prevent the undue exercise of anti-government power.

The internal organization of the asnaf is a rather perplexing problem. Almost no scholarly work, to my knowledge, has been done on "guilds" in Iran. The only moderately informative source in English is an article by Ann Lambton, and her discussion of guilds covers only eight pages (1954:19-26) and this ranges from the Middle Ages to the nineteenth century. Almost all the information on guild structure and organization applies to the Muslim world in general and to the period from the ninth century to the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries (see Massignon 1952; Baer 1970; Lewis 1937; Gibb and Bowen 1950; Stern 1970 and Cahen 1970). The early sources generally describe a situation where there is a permanent structure with a recognized and elected leader known variously in Iran as kadkhoda, ra'is or bashi. Lambton notes that

> The functions of the kadkhoda were to preside at the meetings of the gild, which were held to discuss matters affecting the craft, to settle disputes among the members, to punish those who had infringed the rules of the gild, to apportion the tax quota among the members or for some other purpose. He also acted as an intermediary between the government and the gild (op. cit.:22-23).

Each guild also had, according to Lambton

> . . . a kind of court, formed by the elders, or rish-sefid and presided over by the head of the gild or kadkhoda. This court tried members who had committed petty offences or broken the laws of the gild. Any disputes between the members were also settled by this court (ibid.:21)

The French traveler Chardin, on the other hand, states that the guilds of Persia had few regulations and little internal organization (1811 vol. IV: 93). My own data would seem to agree with Chardin.

The guild, in the sense that Lambton and others have used that term, is either, for all intents and purposes, dead in Iran or never existed in the form which has been discussed in the literature. Since I am not a historian nor do I have adequate command of the historical literature, it is perhaps not proper for me to make such a statement. However, on the basis of recent historical research, there is strong evidence that earlier historians may have "read into" the primary data conceptions of a guild structure familiar to them in the west.

Recent research indicates that contrary to the long held belief of Islamicists, Islamic society was not made up of corporate units (Stern 1970:47ff.). On the contrary,

> . . . in the Islamic view of the world there was the individual believer and there was the whole community of believers, but in between there was no stable grouping regarded as legitimate and permanent. Islamic law did not recognize corporate personality except in a limited sense, and the whole spirit of Islamic social thought went against the formation of limited groups within which there might grow up an exclusive natural solidarity hostile to the all-inclusive solidarity of an umma based on common obedience to God's commands. Not only did corporations [guilds] have no moral or religious base, it is not certain that they ever existed. Cahen's paper throws doubt on Massignon's theory of the

> professional corporations and shows that they were not "guilds" in the medieval European sense, but, in so far as they existed, were instruments of state control (Hourani 1970:14).

There is obviously a difference between a group of men who share common professional interests and who work together, on occasion, to promote those interests, on the one hand, and a corporate organization with a formal structure and hierarchy of officers on the other. The latter is a self-sustaining, perpetual body, whereas the former is much more like a segmentary lineage system in that its "group" characteristics occur only when there is a need. As Sahlins has said in relation to the segmentary lineage structure,

> They are not permanent, absolute social entities, but relative ones. Called into being by external circumstances, the level of organization achieved is in direct proportion to the social order of the opposition, and the lineage segment ceases to function as such when opposition is in abeyance (1961:333 Sahlins' italics).

When informants speak of senf they clearly mean the former, and when they speak of senf-i ettehadieh they mean the latter which, by all evidence, is a relatively recent innovation. Some of the confusion between the two arises, as I have indicated, because informants use senf in common speech as an abbreviated way of referring to senf-i ettehadieh. It is not confusing to the tradesmen but it is to the anthropologist who is trying to figure out the structure of the bazaar.

The government organized senf-i ettehadieh ("guild-unions") have an internal structure; there is a Board of Directors (hay'at-i modireh) which chooses an Executive Committee (hay'at-i ra'iseh) composed of a chairman, vice-chairman, secretary, treasurer and an auditor. These are chosen from among themselves. None of the information which I have indicates how the

Board of Directors is chosen. The membership of the "guild-union" pay dues which average about 2-3 tomans a month (i.e., 20-30 rials a month). This money is generally enough to maintain internal expenses such as paying for the services of a pishkhedmat (a combination of servant, office-boy, errand-boy and janitor), a file clerk (the Arabic zabāt was the word used, although the Persian equivalent is bāyegān). The "guild-union" does not have any further income according to my informants. I was told again and again by different informants that the senf-i ettehadieh has only an official function in facilitating relations with the government and to prevent "injustices and wrongs."

> These ettehadieh are new and temporary. If individuals give money, it will stand and if not, they will not exist. For example, if the government says it is not going to tax the asnaf, they don't need ettehadieh any more because they don't have anything else to do.

While the government may have taken the initiative, then, in organizing these "guild-unions" to gain greater control over their political activities, they do serve a function in protecting certain economic rights of the guild members. Most guild members that I spoke with, however, had a very low opinion of the "guild-union" and were members not by choice.

The "guild-union" does maintain a structure for arbitration, mediation and for judgments of various kinds. I found, however, that the majority of bazaar merchants do not avail themselves of these facilities; largely, it seems because they do not trust the officials whom they see as government appointees. The "guild-unions" seem to function largely for the benefit of the tradesmen outside of the bazaar - tradesmen who have little sense of solidarity or an "in-group" feeling such as that in the bazaar. The "guild-union" seems to offer them an organization which

they can work through. The merchants and tradesmen outside the bazaar, for the most part, are quite distinct from those inside the bazaar. Many of them are members of minority groups such as Christians, Jews, Zoroastrians and Baha'i, who have always felt somewhat insecure in the highly religious and emotionally charged atmosphere of the bazaar, although there are members of these religious groups in the bazaar. Others are tradesmen who have migrated from provincial cities and towns and were, perhaps, unable to rent a shop in the overcrowded bazaar. Or perhaps they are bazaar entrepreneurs who saw greater economic opportunities in catering to the newly emerging westernized middle classes. Quite a number of bazaar tradesmen maintain a retail outlet outside the bazaar and a wholesale outlet in the bazaar to reap the benefits of the higher prices in the north of the city for the same goods that are sold in the bazaar. In any event, merchants and tradesmen outside the bazaar do not have the advantages of the bazaar tradesmen as a solidary grouping. The spatial distances of shops scattered throughout the city do not allow the shopkeepers to be in daily contact with their fellow workers (hamkāri) as the concentration of like shops in the bazaar affords. The bazaar tradesmen in addition have a common stake in the future of the bazaar quarter and can organize and defend their common interests. Their close affiliation with the religious leaders through the mosques of the bazaar and extensive kin ties within the bazaar also provide a common idiom for support and creates crosscutting ties and bonds among bazaaris of different guilds and professions. The religious leaders and tradesmen pass each other every day in the lanes of the bazaar, exchange information and work together in resolving conflicts. Those scattered throughout the city do not have these

advantages and must work together through some such organization as the "guild-union" and must put up with its bureaucratic and politically interfering activities since they have few alternatives.

Ranking of the Asnaf

The asnaf are ranked in the bazaar according to various criteria. The primary basis of ranking is religious. That is, to the degree that Islam forbids certain occupations to believers, it can be said that the professional structure of the bazaar is determined by religious beliefs - ideally, only those practicing trades regarded as pure are admitted to the bazaar.

The list of impure trades is long and includes those that contravene the letter or intent of Islamic law, such as the prohibition of usury, games of chance, the production, sale or use of alcoholic beverages, spilled blood or the raising, sale or eating of pork and other impure animals. Such prohibitions affect more than fifty trades. One consequence of this is that minority groups have specialized in many of these occupations. For example, Armenians and other Christians have tended to specialize in the production and sale of musical instruments and Armenians and Jews have monopolized the production of alcoholic beverages in Iran. In recent years with the relative ineffectuality of Islamic injunctions in much of Iranian society, combined with the increase in western habits and practices, there has been an associated increase in the public consumption of beer, wine and other alcoholic beverages. The outcome of this is that the minority groups have cornered the market on a highly successful industry. Moneylenders have also tended to be members of minority groups, especially Jews, since taking loans on interest from Jews and vice versa is regarded as religiously acceptable to a bazaari; but Muslims themselves

have also long practiced moneylending (see Levy 1962:256ff.).[6]

Aside from the religious ranking of professions, there is also an informal ranking of tradesmen and merchants in the bazaar. That is, the large-scale merchants (tajer) who are usually engaged in import-export trade have the highest status. This group is not included by the bazaaris as being part of the "asnaf" (that is, the "bourgeoisie"). This latter distinction is reserved for the middle range of tradesmen and smaller merchants, as well as the craft and artisan groups. This middle range has an internal ranking order with the tradesmen (kasabeh) ranking highest and the craft and artisan groups ranking lowest.

Officially, no distinction is made between the various asnaf - "however, some are preferred by various government offices." In the informal day to day relations, individuals who practice a certain profession are accorded greater respect and given priority in certain circumstances by government offices. The exact basis of such preferences was not clearly spelled out by my informants, but the following seem to be of greatest importance, although not necessarily in any order of precedence. First, is the degree of economic importance to the country, especially if such a profession has a bearing on employment or the gross national product.

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[6]Informants noted that Muslim bazaar merchants prefer to borrow from Jewish moneylenders because "the interest rate is lower and they are willing to help the one who has borrowed the money." Another informant commented on another occasion that Jews are easy with a Muslim debtor in default "because they are afraid." It seems that Jewish moneylenders because of their minority status in Iran are more lenient with debtors. Many Jewish merchants that I interviewed expressed their fear that Iran would "sell them out" to the Arabs. That is, informants felt in 1968 that Iran might make a deal with the Arab states whereby Iran would support the Arab cause against Israel in return for a guarantee that the Arabs would not interfere in Iran's activities in the Persian Gulf. This, of course, has not happened and Iran had, as late as 1971, occupied islands in the Persian Gulf and has not supported the Arabs in their war with Israel.

The asnaf singled out here were the "carpet weavers, shoemakers and jewellers" (I am not clear why the latter were included except insofar as jewelry is of high value and can be used to provide collateral and is itself a medium of exchange and/or a store of value besides having great liquidity). Secondly, some asnaf have large numbers of members and supporters of one type or another (usually shop assistants, porters, servants, "office boys" etc.) which makes those asnaf a potential political force and a vocal group in demonstrations. Thirdly, the cumulative wealth of members of certain professions was also singled out as an important factor in the preferences given some senf. Carpet merchants and jewellers, for example, are individually and collectively more wealthy than green-grocers and shoemakers. Because of their wealth they have influence and power in the senf, in the bazaar and in the country as a whole.

In the past, during the 'aid-i Qurban festival (feast of sacrifice) a ritual sacrifice took place which, it appears, had significance for the further ranking of the asnaf.

> In the past, during 'aid-i Qurban, it was the custom to sacrifice a camel at Maydan Sepah and the representatives of each senf would come and they would each get a piece of the sacrificed camel for the share of the senf. The government slaughtered the camel and the representatives of each senf took part of the camel as a sign that they are sharing the affairs [sic].

In answer to my question about a specific distribution of portions of the camel, this informant answered, "yes, each portion would go to a specific senf and this was set from a long time ago; but I don't know who got the head and who got the leg." In trying to confirm this and other statements, another informant commented, "They used to do these things before but Reza Shah caused it to disappear. . . . They would have a camel

and use make-up on the camel. They used to say the camel belongs to the Shah and the senfs (senfhā) which were more popular would get part of the camel in order to show they are closer to the Shah. Some of them would get the head, others the leg, etc."

Another, elderly informant provided a bit greater detail on these ceremonies:

> It used to be something to no purpose. The camel was sent by the Shah which gave it [artificially, it seems] importance. Someone with the title Jahan Suz Mirza (it is possible to gather the humerous and festive nature of the occasion by this name. It means literally 'Prince of the Burning World') used to act as a representative of the Shah on that day. The Shah's retainers and officers would pay the same respect and do the same formalities and ceremonies for him as they would do for the Shah. He would ride on a horse and retainers and others would follow. Then they would bring the camel with musical instruments and drums. Because the camel belonged to the Shah the head (ra'is) of each senf would consider it a big honor to have part of that camel. The head of the camel would go to the leader (kadkhoda) of the blacksmiths (na'lband). The reason was once they had an argument and one of them was killed. That's why they would give them this honor to have the head [sic].

Question: What about the other parts?

Answer: I don't know. I only know they used to bring a camel and they would put make-up (bazak) on a big, fat camel and they would put a shawl on him and play drums in front of him and they would bring him with a lot of attendants and retainers and the man who used to act as the Shah - Jahan Suz Mirza - during that hour would ride on a horse and everybody would salute him and pay great respect to him. He would then order the camel sacrificed in the name of the Shah. Then he would go home. He didn't have anything to do until next year to become Shah for one hour. I had seen him. He was negro and a thin man. He used to dress up with a wide belt slung diagonally across his chest with a sword. I am not sure now whether it was the senf of the blacksmiths that got the head, perhaps

it was the senf of the saddle-makers because at that time both were important since there were no cars.

Question: Was there any rivalry between the senf?

Answer: They didn't do anything. They may have said, 'Why is it this way?' But it was like this from the beginning. It ended about the fourth or fifth year of the reign of Reza Shah. He said, whoever wants to do this sort of thing should do it at home. The times (zaman) wouldn't accept this either. The time with all the studying and universities wouldn't accept it. What was this business of dressing up animals? Who said it that provided this precedent? They [presumably people in general] made it up themselves and the time accepted that, but now people think it is wrong and they forbid it. The beating of the chests (sineh zani) during Muharram is also something that serves no purpose. The times also won't accept it. Anything that is not ordered or decreed by Islam is not acceptable, but prayers (namaz) are always there and the times will accept it.

I could find no published sources that went beyond these statements (see for example, Joghrafiayeh Isfahan 1342/1963:88; see also Lienhardt 1961: 23-24 and Henry 1951 for cross-cultural comparisons on the significance and implications of ceremonial food distributions for social ranking).

During the Muharram mourning period commemorating the martyrdom of Husain, especially the tenth of the month ('Ashura), numerous mourning ceremonies are held in mosques (masjed) in the bazaar. On these occasions, government officials come to the ceremonies to demonstrate their piety and also to encourage smoother relations with the asnaf. Note the following comments from an informant:

The evening of 'Ashura the Prime Minister and the Minister of Court will come to the mourning gatherings. They will listen to people's complaints too. If one of the preachers (va'ez) has something to request he will do it while he is on top of the pulpit (minbar). The Prime Minister and the

> Minister of Court will listen and they will act on this as long as it doesn't involve any responsibility for them [I assume the informant means here that they won't go out of their way to assume responsibility that something will be done]. Every year the Prime Minister comes to one of the mosques. This year (1347/1968) he went to Masjed-i Azarbaijaniha. He was supposed to go to Masjed Sa'id Azizullah and I was supposed to be one of the speakers but he sent a message through one of the chiefs of police that he is not coming and will to Masjed Sheikh Abdul Hussain [informally known, as I have indicated elsewhere, as the mosque of the Azarbaijani's]. But other important people (rojal) would come and this is a big prestige and a brightening-up of the mourning ceremonies.

The informant went on to clarify that the mourning ceremonies which are held by the Azarbaijanis are "quite large and elaborate gatherings and attract a lot of people. The government respects them also because they do it only for the purposes of mourning" [that is, without further political motivations]. The government officials are invited to attend such ceremonies and do not attend a particular ceremony without such an invitation. All gatherings are organized by certain members of the senf who take it upon themselves to collect money for the gathering and ensure the smooth functioning of the event. "Sometimes it happens that one person is the leader of all of them. The rest of them will follow his advice. Most of these people are those looking for high positions [riasat talab: literally, requesting, begging or demanding the directorship; a leader or one seeking power]. They like to have the government officials come there and they have a chance to entertain (pazira'i kardan) them; and if they have any request they ask the government officials at this time." Many members of certain asnaf are anti-government and would not invite government officials to such gatherings, while others, as we have just seen, will go out of their way to invite government officials,

entertain them thereby getting them in their debt,[7] at least temporarily, and request certain favors. Usually such requests are on behalf of the senf as a whole, while others may request action on behalf of a particular person. For example, one request which was made in my presence to the Prime Minister was that he attend the opening of a chelo-kebabi restaurant. The petitioner hoped that the de facto recognition given his restaurant by such an eminent figure would ensure his success. The Prime Minister denied his request by saying, in effect,

> If I come to open one chelo-kebabi I have to go to all, because they expect me to go and this not only jeopardizes my position but also makes people my enemy. So please, allow me to come anywhere you invite me after I am no longer Prime Minister.

Officially, government officials avoid any semblance of favoritism in the granting of favors but privately seem to offer advantages to bazaaris that are in their own (that is, the government's) best interests. To the extent that certain senf (through "politicized" individuals) are able to gain benefits over other senf to that same extent they acquire some degree of prestige. The prestige I am speaking of here is best conceived of as public recognition and admiration (even that grudgingly given) of the skill to acquire for oneself and one's associates advantages which others do not have.

In the remainder of this study I shall use the term senf (which I shall not translate as "guild") to refer to a status group within the

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[7] Known in Persian as "getting someone to eat your salt." Carstairs (1957: 50) notes a similar phenomenon in India. Carstairs notes the comments of a host who says "Thanks to the bounty of God the Rajah has been here and has eaten my salt: so I have the whip hand."

bazaar made up of individuals who share a common profession, have similar values and religious orientations and who, because of this, feel a sense of closeness, of solidarity and who act, for the most part, in ways that will enhance or maintain this particular style of life. A further indication that the senf is not a formally organized entity came out quite clearly in the comments of an informant. He noted that

> In order to show they exist the asnaf arrange to give ceremonies in mosques and elsewhere. . . . Each senf has a certain type of ceremony the specific size and type depending on the amount of money available to that senf. (italics mine)

Clearly, if the asnaf had a recognized structure and organization there would be no need to "show they exist" whereas on the contrary, if there were little or no formal organization such collective activities as gathering together for religious services and identifying the asnaf who so organize by displaying religious flags and banners would be one way of giving recognition to the fact that such groups exist and play an important part in bazaar society and the economy of the country.

The ceremonies referred to in the quote are those associated with the major religious events of Islam and those dates associated with the Shi'a Imams, most important of which is Imam Husain. The month of Muharram is of exceeding importance in the religious life of the bazaar tradesmen since it commemorates the martyrdom of Husain. As Sayyid Husain Nasr has commented, "His martyrdom on the tenth of Muharram (61A.H.) marks to this day the height of the religious calendar and his tragic death symbolizes fully the ethos of Shi'ism" (1966:164). The whole of Part II of this dissertation is devoted to the importance of the symbol of Husain to the tradesmen of the bazaar.

## Kinship as a Status Group Variable

The bazaar must be understood as a distinct sub-culture containing a number of status groups chief among which are the small tradesmen and the ulama. Both of these groups tend to be endogamous and this pattern of endogamy has tended to create relatively homogeneous groups with clearly conceived conceptions of status honor. The following material briefly discusses the bazaar in terms of its underlying values regarding rules of descent, marriage, endogamy and conceptions of honor as boundary-maintaining devices. Stress is placed on the role of religion in guiding behavior in the realm of kinship.

## The Model of the Ideal Family

The ideal household is composed of an elementary or nuclear family but the reality sometimes differs from this ideal. To begin with, not all persons marry, and not all of those who do produce children. This means that many households are in reality domestic groups which are often composed of one or more nuclear families or segments of nuclear families and various other relatives. In spite of the many combinations of relatives which make up the households of bazaar tradesmen, however, the nuclear family is still the normative ideal household in the city of Tehran, as Table 1 indicates. It is in many respects the foundation on which much of urban society is based.

The family is, in the mind of many religious bazaar tradesmen, a grouping which ought to be modeled on that of the family of 'Ali. That is, relations between members of the family should be patterned after the attitudes which, it is believed, inspired this pure family (khānavādeh-i motaher). A father ought to have the wisdom, courage and foresight which

TABLE I

TYPE AND SIZE OF HOUSEHOLDS: TEHRAN

| Type of Household[1] | Size of Household - number of persons | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | 1-3 | 4-6 | 7-10 | 10+ |
| Married couple, no children | 28.84 | 02.28 | 00.70 | 00.84 |
| Parents and unmarried children | 34.66 | 91.44 | 90.13 | 71.53 |
| Parents, married children, no grandchildren | 00.44 | 01.15 | 02.22 | 03.62 |
| Parents, married children, grandchildren | 00.08 | 01.63 | 05.75 | 21.70 |
| Other (singles, etc.) | 35.98 | 03.40 | 01.10 | 01.61 |
| Collective Households[2] | ---- | 00.10 | 00.10 | 00.70 |
| PER CENT TOTALS | 100.00 | 100.00 | 100.00 | 100.00 |
| RAW TOTALS | 189,451 | 250,522 | 109,371 | 16,625 |

NOTES: 1. A household consists of one or several individuals residing in one place and sharing expenses and principal meals.

2. Collective Household here consists of people living in certain types of institutions or group quarters, e.g., sanitoria, mental hospitals, prisons, barracks, student dormitories, charity homes and similar places.

SOURCE: Iranian Statistical Center, National Census of Population and Housing, Vol. X, Tehran Sharestan (August, 1967). Data reworked to provide percentages.

characterized 'Ali, while the mother should in all instances portray those feminine and motherly virtues exhibited by Fatima, the daughter of Muhammad and the wife of 'Ali. In the eyes of the Shi'a she represents all that is divine in womanhood. The Sunni majority in Islam while greatly respecting Fatima, give greater prominence to the wives of the Prophet, particularly 'A'isha between whom and Fatima there was bitter hostility. The Shi'a believe that the birth of Fatima was miraculous and her marriage with 'Ali was decided by divine decree. In the mystical imagery of Sufism, which was carried over into popular Shi'ism, she is known as the "Virgin-Mother" (batool) who has given birth to the line of Holy Imams (see Corbin 1970:160 and also the article FATIMA in the Encyclopaedia of Islam 1960). In different aspects of her person, therefore, Fatima provides a model for both the mother and daughter in the family. A son is expected to exhibit courage and respect like that of Hasan and Husain, the sons of 'Ali. Through participation in the rituals associated with the anniversary dates of these holy personages; by shedding tears for them and their fate, one acquires religious blessings (barakat, savab); and by appealing for aid and intercession the members of the family are less vulnerable to material disadvantages and the spiritual attacks of jinn and other evil forces.

Through reference to an exemplary model of family life as expressed by that of the pure family of 'Ali (the virtues of which are continuously being quoted by religious leaders in their sermons and the narrations of the rozeh khan), a man or woman in family life participates in a reality that transcends their own individual existence. The harshness and difficulties of their present lives and even simple activities and emotions are seen in the light of the stories which are told about 'Ali and his family and they thereby come to possess a validity and inherent value

which is absolute and intrinsic. In the dramatizations of the martyrdoms of members of this holy family, constant reference is made to the strong sense of filial piety, love and personal sacrifice which each member of this family felt for the other. The congregations in attendance always burst into loud, unrestrained weeping, sobbing and beating of breasts when the narrator (rozeh khan) describes in detail the events surrounding the martyrdom of the members of this holy family. One example should suffice here to convey the tone of the dramatization. I shall discuss this in detail in Part II.

> With his six month old son 'Ali Asghar in his arms, the Imam cried out to the enemy that as this innocent babe had defiled none, at least he should be spared and a little water given to him to allay his thirst. But the reply was an arrow shot at the child's neck which pinned it to his father's arm. After returning the cruelly murdered child to its sorrowing mother's arms (who then sang a mournful mother's lament over her dead child) the Imam returned to pay the last of the sacrifice with his own blood. Arrow after arrow followed piercing his body into a sieve until, when the aged Imam fell from his horse his body did not touch the ground but was held off the ground by the arrows which were sticking out of his body. Shemr, who has earned everlasting shame for himself, after deriding the fallen hero, cut off his head. Ruqaiyeh, Husain's young daughter, weeps over the death of her father whose head is then brought into her presence whereupon she falls upon it moaning and sobbing until she, too, dies of sorrow, prostrate over the severed head.

The words are carefully chosen by the narrator to maximize the sentiments and emotions associated with filial and parental love - feelings strongly held by participants in these religious gatherings. I was often told by informants that the mention of a particular name - 'Ali Asghar, Husain, Ruqaiyeh - often kindled thoughts of a deceased brother, sister, daughter, mother or father or other dearly beloved relative and this brought on unrestrained weeping in remembrance of that person.

## The Bilateral Kindred

Kinship ties remain, perhaps, the single most important social relationship in urban Iran. It is generally within one's kinship network that the closest friendships exist and in which the individual finds support, affection and a sense of moral obligation. Kinship is reckoned bilaterally through both the father's and the mother's lines and the system is envisaged as a network of clearly recognized dyadic relationships radiating outward from a particular ego. While there is a patrilateral bias following, it seems, the attitude fostered in Islam toward the sexes in terms of inheritance, succession and general world view, the specific degree of emphasis placed on one line or the other varies according to the particular situation and ego's perception of the role he should play. Thus, if a tradesman is discussing a business deal and it would be expedient to emphasize his kin ties with a well-known, trusted and honorable tradesman on his mother's side, he does so; whereas, in another context he may find it expedient to trace descent from certain religious leaders (ulama) on his father's side.[8] There is a sense in which all kinship systems could, of course, be considered bilateral, or perhaps more accurately, we could

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[8]Bilateral descent reckoning is exceedingly important in the bazaar since a person's "background" is continually recalled so as to place an individual in an overall moral context. The remembrance of others' genealogical connections is a positive attribute for a tradesman since it indicates his active participation in and concern for the activities of fellow tradesmen. Two tradesmen were discussing a third carpet merchant and one of them had difficulty in placing the merchant. Suddenly he said, "He is the one who married so and so's sister and is related to Mr. X by such and such a relationship." The other tradesman was very pleased and kept repeating "excellent, excellent, very good!" Obviously in an economic situation strongly controlled by credit relations, it is necessary to be inquisitive, "nosy" and gossip about others in order to pass along information about the relative social, economic and moral standing of others since any one of these factors may affect the debtor-creditor relationship.

say that filiation is bilateral and complementary (Fortes 1953:33). However, in the case of a bilateral kinship network, the cognatic connections are, unlike unilateral systems, generally equilateral in value for economic, ritual, jural and political purposes.

Wealth and prestige are passed from one generation to the next. In the case of the former this is through customary channels and rules of inheritance, and in the case of the latter, in the ethos of popular judgment. Property and wealth are elements of prestige, but wealth alone, for the most part, loses its significance. A combination of wealth and piety accords the greater prestige.

Individual and family reputation is a value in and of itself - without it social life has little meaning. Such prestige is inherited from both the father's and the mother's family. Ideally, the prestige of the patrilateral connections should be greater; but the quality of the mother's family of origin is also critical. In Iran and throughout the Middle East and elsewhere, criticism of the mother, who contributes important moral qualities to the characters of her children, is a very devastating and effective method of denigrating a family. Anyone may, of course, increase or diminish his reputation by his own actions, but it is on the basis of a reputation inherited from both parents that, from his youth, he faces the judgment of the community. A funeral commemorative service (khatm) is of special significance in this regard. A service which attracts a large number of people, especially individuals of prestige and social renown in the bazaar, government and religious circles, reflects favorably on the children of the deceased.[9]

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[9]It is also believed that the soul of the deceased will become happy with a large number of people saying the fatiheh (opening chapter of the Koran). [baraye shadi-ye ruhesh fatgheh miferestand]

> People will way that he was a good man. What people think about the deceased reflects on his children and has direct effects on the success of their business. People trust them and do business with them.

If the reputation of the parents is unsatisfactory, it will be exceedingly difficult for the person to redeem it. A tradesman in yard goods (bazāz) was dishonest in his dealings and other tradesmen in the bazaar nicknamed him "Haji dozdeh" (a humorous and sarcastic way of indicating that this man had pretensions to piety but in reality was a thief). "Yes, they will leave this name on him so everyone knows he is dishonest and no one will do business with him. Even now his sons are known as pesar-i haji dozdeh (son of haji the thief). It is for this and other reasons that a marriage betrothal is approached with great care and deliberation. While the personal qualities of a prospective wife (or husband for that matter) are of great concern, the crucial question to be discussed is invariably the quality and prestige of the family and close kin.

There are many factors which are taken into consideration in evaluating the prestige of a family, many of which are relative to the status group of the individuals concerned. For example, a merchant family (tajer) would consider it beneath their prestige and honor to marry into a family of tradesmen (kasabeh), although this restriction might be offset somewhat if the tradesman were wealthy. In general, however, families look for such things as (1) the extent of divorce in the family; (2) mental illness; (3) the social and occupational positions of members of the family, especially in relation to positions of possible influence. That is, other things being equal, a family with many educated members who occupy positions in government, police, army, religious hierarchy, etc., will have greater prestige than another family with few or no influential members.

Such positions of influence signify that the family is able to care for its own and improve their life chances. On the other hand, if the members of the family have low occupational positions with low incomes, etc., the higher family is generally reluctant to intermarry with that family for fear of taking on additional social and economic burdens brought about by requests from the newly acquired affines. In a very real sense then, this is what "marrying down" implies.

A fourth point (4) is religiosity. This is generally a very important factor and may outweigh any other consideration including wealth and occupational position. However, religiously oriented families prefer to marry into other families like themselves and within the ranks of the ulama, which, as we have noted, is not without individuals and families of great power and influence in society. Such marriages are merely another type of strategy and do not imply the abandonment of instrumental motivations. Extreme piety or religiosity often accompanies a low regard for secular education, restrictions on the freedom of women, a negative attitude toward music, dancing, the cinema and other forms of popular entertainment and any other form of behavior or belief that might be interpreted as detrimental to the Islamic way of life. In general, therefore, people with this style of life marry among themselves. A woman informant about fifty years old, who is considered religious by her acquaintances, told my wife in this regard, "They marry their own type. They are different from ours."

There is a strong sense of morality in the bazaar centered around the basic principles of Islam, especially the sense of duty to guide others on the right path, and which extends to kinship and all other patterns of

behavior. Implicit here, of course, is a conception that those who are "guiding" know the right way of acting and can inform others to follow this path. Much conflict arises over the extension of this idea to areas which are open to diverse interpretations, such as the role of women in society and what factors constitute sexual propriety and modesty on the part of females, and even business matters are regulated by the religious idiom. Even within families there are splits that tend to follow a traditional-modern dichotomy. This was clearly brought out at a wedding reception I attended.

Two bazaar tradesmen arranged for the marriage of their respective son and daughter. In both extended families there were members who were quite religious in a traditional, orthodox sense and others who were quite modern and westernized. In planning a reception for the members of the families, it was discovered that many people would not attend if alcoholic beverages were served and if the women were not in veiling; whereas, others indicated that if they were not permitted to wear what they chose and drink what they chose they also would not attend. The families were split along a "traditional-modern" axis and a solution seemed impossible. Whichever alternative was chosen was sure to alienate some members of each family. The solution which was adopted proved to be a costly one. It was decided to hold two receptions on consecutive evenings one for the more "modern" kinsmen, where alcoholic beverages would be served, men and women could dance together and women could wear the latest mini-skirts and décolletage. The bride and groom were present, as

were the mothers of the respective couples.[10] The girl's father was also present but not the father of the groom nor his brother nor any of his immediate patrilateral cousins. Most members of the family of the mother of the groom were present. Some women did show up in the traditional veiling, but they gathered together in a separate room off the main reception and dancing area and did not mingle with the male guests. Female guests paid them visits, spoke with them and brought them food and drink (non-alcoholic). The occasion was not unlike a wedding reception in the West and was a festive occasion.

The reception the following night, however, was much different. Religiously oriented individuals were in attendance with the men in one room and the veiled women in another. There was no music, no dancing and the joy of the occasion was very subdued. Verses from the Koran were read to the group. The bride and groom were present out of necessity rather than desire. After the gathering had broken up I asked someone about this type of religious reception and was told that this type of reception is called a khatm ba shirini (that is, a funeral service with sweets). This term is used in a rather derogatory manner, especially when men only are invited to such a reception with the women holding

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[10] I was present when the arrangements were being discussed and an interesting incident occurred. The mother of the bride said there was to be no dancing. Her brother who was also present (as was her husband) said to her in front of representatives of both families that she should not speak out of place and added further, rather nasty, comments. He criticized her hypocrisy in religious behavior and trying to give the appearance of being religious. At an earlier occasion, during the wedding ceremony, my wife was sitting next to this woman and she was complaining of the slowness of the ceremony. In her complaints she made a joke that it was easier to become a sigheh (temporary wife equivalent to a prostitute, for all intents and purposes) than it was to conclude a regular wedding ceremony. Certainly not the kind of comment one would expect of a religious woman at the marriage of her daughter.

a separate, similar reception. Since the bridegroom had to pay for the receptions, it proved to be very costly and he was quite angry over what he called the "stupidity" of the traditionalists. I was told though that such an arrangement had to be worked out in order to avoid alienating particular members of each of the families and thus losing them from their networks of "connections." Family members with different orientations toward life tended to lead separate lives in any case and rarely saw each other outside of funeral ceremonies and the like, but they felt they needed each other for the services which each could potentially perform for the other at some future date.

In any case, there is generally a strong concern for upright behavior on the part of individuals which in turn reflects on the family. Such concern indicates there is some degree of competition and mutual opposition between families - competition for prestige as revealed through piety, wealth and a reputation for honor. There is competition not only between families but also within extended families as we have just seen. The patterns of intermarriage between religious leaders and tradesmen reinforce traditional values and strengthen the collective solidarity of the bazaar vis-a-vis outsiders.

The ideal, preferential marriage is endogamous within the khānavādeh or what is essentially a patrilateral kindred (see Fox 1967:170), particularly father's brother's son or daughter. While this was the ideal as stated by my informants, it was rarely followed in practice. In fact, marriages between cross-cousins were much more frequent than parallel cousin marriages. While marriage within the khānavādeh is preferred as an ideal, it is more common to find marriages within the khishavand, i.e., the extended kin network of consanguines and affinals including the spouses of consanguines of ego and consanguines of the spouse of ego (see Firth 1970:173

for a similar distinction). The next level of integration from which marriage partners would be sought would be outside the universe of kin but preferably within the sociocultural milieu of the bazaar - that is, with members of families of the same general status group such as merchants, tradesmen and religious leaders. In general, intermarriage with a respected ulama family is much sought after. A contract of marriage is normally the only instrument which may bring two unrelated families into positive association and cooperation. Indeed, a sense of the community's endogamy is an important element in their consciousness of being a community at all. Bazaaris, when they wish to stress their solidarity in opposition to edaris and "the government" often claim that they are all kinsmen, although they quickly add that this was more true in the past than today when so many Azerbaijani Turks and others have come into the bazaar. Today, there is a tendency for those of marriageable age to seek spouses outside of the kinship network and out of the world of the bazaar altogether. On the other hand, since many of the younger generation go on to university or seek positions outside the bazaar and commerce in government service or some form of private employment, there is considerable intermarriage with edaris even within a given family. This process of individuals seeking employment with the government and private institutions outside the bazaar has been occuring since the 1930's - ever since the process of accelerated modernization began under Reza Shah and employment opportunities and alternatives became increasingly available.

Summary

From one point of view the bazaar may be regarded as a collection of interrelated families - at least this is the conception which many merchants and tradesmen have of the bazaar. A conception which is, incidentally, usually qualified by some such statement as "before all the Azarbaijanis

[Turks] moved in." Kinship ties remain among the most important factors in the lives of the bazaar tradesmen. Inside the limits of the kinship network the tradesman finds support, affection and a sense of moral obligation. Knowledge of one's own and others' genealogical ties becomes of great importance for tradesmen operating in a credit system governed largely by moral rather than legal restraints. Endogamy within the subculture of the bazaar is preferred but is becoming increasingly less as occupations change and the pervasiveness of secular education increases. While these factors are lessening the cohesiveness of the bazaar, the tradesmen nevertheless still perceive of the bazaar as an endogamous community quite distinct from other areas of the city. To them it is a moral community bound by the obligations of shared religious beliefs and practices and shared kinship ties, each reinforcing the other. Bailey has summarized the importance of these factors in discussing political "credit," but I think the conception of economic credit could be substituted in the following quote to apply to our situation in the bazaar:

> . . . if this relationship [of short credit and harsh terms] is supplemented by, or even replaced by a bond of religion or of kinship or of both, the tie becomes a moral one, is less easily broken, and commands much more generous terms of credit. You can petition to have a defaulting debtor declared bankrupt; but it is less easy to do so if he is your brother-in-law and a deacon of the church to which you belong (1969:48).

Religious Conservatism and Attitudes Toward Women

There is much evidence to indicate that many of the small tradesmen are much more religiously and socially conservative than the wealthier tajer or import-export merchant. Many do not want radio or

television[11] nor do they attend the cinema, all of which they consider religiously forbidden (haram). For recreation they will visit the tomb of Imamzadeh 'abd-ul azim in Ray or they will visit other tombs of saints near Tehran or Qum.[12] If they have some money they will go to Shi'a holy places such as Mashad or Najaf or Karbala. If they have still more money they will take their families on a pilgrimage to Mecca. They still refuse to allow their wives, daughters and unmarried sisters to go outside the home without chador or veiling. Even in referring to his wife as a term of reference, a religiously conservative man will use the word manzel (literally, "house"). For example, he will say "Manzel goft . . ." (My wife said . . ."). It is considered shameful to refer to one's wife directly in speech since such a word has obvious overtones of sexuality implicit in it. Women, for their part, avoid the use of the term shohar (husband). This was clear when my wife attended a gathering of bazaar women. One woman whose husband was away on business was talking about how

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[11] In my interviews among the tradesmen many have stated their belief that radio and television were signs of the advent of the Mahdi (the Saviour or Messiah in Shi'a theology). It is believed that the Anti-Christ or Dajal will precede the Mahdi and will come riding on an ass. The hairs of the ass are supposed to give off pleasant music which will attract the unbelievers to follow the Anti-Christ. Radio and television are considered by many to be such distractions to the true believer. Other signs reported by some of my informants were that cities will be connected by iron and men will let their hair grow like women and will wear women's clothing and vice versa. It is interesting in this respect to compare some data that was collected by the famous British scholar on Iran, E. G. Browne. In his travels in Iran at the end of the nineteenth century Browne found that Iranians believed the Dajal or Anti-Christ was to appear from America (1950:237; 479). Browne also worked extensively among the then dissident group of Babis. To the Babis the Anti-Christ was the mullahs of Islam (ibid.:237).

[12] The bazaar tradesmen and others in Tehran believe that anyone who makes three visits to the shrine of Imamzadeh 'abd-ul azim in Ray, some ten kilometers south of Tehran, is granted the same spiritual blessings (savab) of one who has made a pilgrimage to the tomb of Husain at Karbala. A great many of the bazaar tradesmen themselves have cemetery plots near this shrine or have relatives buried here. Constant visits - often once a week - are made by the tradesmen to this shrine.

she missed her husband (shohar). The other women present criticized her for this saying "she is always talking about her shohar; isn't she ashamed." A number of women related to my wife that they feel somewhat shy or "guilty" whenever they use the word shohar because of its sexual implications. They prefer to refer to their husbands as pedar-i baccheha (father of the children).

A man is more interested in his sons than in his daughters not because of the continuity of the agnatic link but rather because it is important for a man to beget male children since in doing so he asserts his masculinity. In addition, a daughter is a potential threat to his honor and manliness for at any time he may be called up to defend the honor of his family because of the indiscretions of his daughter. Sons bring honor; daughters bring the possibility of dishonor. Defense of one's honor in the urban context today has little meaning, however, beyond verbal assaults. Instances are known to the writer where a father has killed his daughter because of her sexual indiscretions, but such are the exceptions rather than the rule. Usually, the girl is sent from the house to live elsewhere, often in another city with distant relatives to avoid the shame resulting from the gossip of neighbors and others.

There is a formal, unstated preference for the father's kin which seems to be in accord with the greater value which is placed in Islamic society on the male sex. The ideas that have been prevalent in Islamic societies, especially Iran, about women have been both ambiguous and ambivalent. Basic to the Islamic world view is the division of society into reciprocal role relationships - each role distinct yet functioning to provide complementary roles with the necessary goods and services. This attitude extends to the sexes as well.

Values in pre-Islamic and Islamic Iran have given a higher status for male and a lower status for female along a continuum of honor and shame. In the Islamic view, women are, in a sense creatures of the devil whose sexuality continually threatens the honor of men. Women, therefore, whether willingly or unwillingly, are agents of the devil's will. The Muslim community as understood by my informants is therefore divided into opposite yet complementary categories which are moral as well as biological.

The ambivalent attitudes toward women can be seen in the conception of Fatima as "Virgin Mother" and the epitome of purity and womanhood which it is the object of all women to emulate, on the one hand, and the conception of women as the epitome of evil and sin (gonah) on the other. The female is an awe-inspiring figure. The mysteries of creation are part of her nature and inspire awe and wonder but at the same time fear and uncertainty. Women have great powers over men which the latter find hard to resist. In order to cope with these creative and destructive powers, Muslims have developed cultural mechanisms to control these forces. One such technique is the cultural idiom which states that women are socially inferior beings and must be treated as if they were a threat to man - secluded, veiled and given little opportunity for self-expression. An idea of the ambivalent ideas about women can be gotten from the following excerpts. They are placed in an order of increasing ambivalence.

> Islam considers men and women to be equal; man is not superior to woman.

> Islam put man and woman on the same scale and said both of you are from one origin and unit [sic]. When you are from one unit your root is the same, so you cannot consider yourself superior to the other.

> But Islam has divided the work, that is, everyone according to his dignity, ability and mental structure.
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> The creation of human beings is the same, but the structure of man is different from that of the woman.
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> But because women are made to be more sensitive and imitative and become influenced more, and they cannot see the problems as a man does, that is why you cannot leave some of the problems to women. But from the point of view of religion, women's rights are safe.

This last point seems to get at the crux of the matter. As far as religion is concerned, women are equal to men before God. Believing women have equal access to Paradise.[13] However, in nonreligious matters, women are considered inferior (it might be noted that since Islam does not make a distinction between the religious and the secular, ideally women should be accorded the same treatment in society as in theology). "God has preferred the one sex over the other in the matter of mental ability and good counsel and in their power for the performance of duties and the carrying out of [divine] commands" (Levy 1962:99). In both the orthodox literary tradition of Islam, as found especially in the works of the interpreters of doctrine, and in the world of everyday affairs among the older generation of bazaaris and ulama, there is a strict division of labor between men and

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[13]While access to Paradise may be open to all believers, the conception of paradise as characterized in the Koran is most decidedly male oriented. Note the following:

> But such as fears the station of his Lord, for them shall be two gardens . . . abounding in branches . . . therein two fountains of running water . . . therein of every fruit two kinds . . . reclining upon couches lined with brocade, the fruits of the gardens nigh to gather . . . therein maidens restraining their glances, untouched before them by any man or jinn . . . lovely as rubies, beautiful as coral . . . Shall the recompense of goodness be other than goodness? (Surah 55:46-69; verses 70-78 repeat the same theme stating again that beautiful maidens untouched by man or jinn await the believer in Paradise).

There seems little in the description that would appeal to women.

women. Women can engage in those activities for which they are capable, but the interpretation of the extent of those capabilities is in the hands of the men of the community - husbands, brothers and religious leaders.

The questions of seclusion and veiling are also rather ambiguous, although as Levy has noted, "Later, in spite of the clearly expressed intentions of the Koran, its interpreters - frequently men of Persian or Turkish origin who had been brought up in an environment in which men avowedly ruled, imposed their own views and traditions upon the Muhammadedan world" (ibid.:130; italics mine). It would, I think, be enlightening if I were to provide an extensive verbatim record of an interview which I had with a religious leader in the bazaar of Tehran. This interview provides in succinct form the views and interpretations not only of this particular religious leader, but summarizes the views held by the majority of my bazaar informants regarding the position of women, particularly in the process of social change. The interview was conducted in Persian and the translation is mine.

S.T.: IN THE NAME OF GOD THE MERCIFUL, THE COMPASSIONATE

S.T.: I don't remember how much I have talked to you about women. I believe it was about a month ago when . . .

Gus: No, it was less.

S.T.: Less?

Gus: Yes, about 2 or 3 weeks ago.

S.T.: Islam has a very broad discussion about women, especially in the holy Koran. We have a chapter in the Koran by the name of "Women" [Chapter IV] and there are other divine commands regarding women in the Koran. So if we want to discuss about women in detail, we have to write books and talk about it for days and obviously this would be beyond your patience. So I have to talk about it. Islam considers the man and woman to be equal. Man is not superior to woman. The Koran insists that basically man and woman are created equally. Men and women are created so their number increases. From this, we understand

that the rank of woman is equal to man. Man doesn't have superiority. Of course, if you study about the period before Islam in Arabia and the attitude of men toward women and compare it with the period after Islam you will understand it very well. How? When a woman's husband would die, the leader of the tribe or her sons would put their hands on her and say "this is mine," the same when they would claim other property. If she wasn't his mother he could even marry her. It means he could marry his step-mother. If she wasn't worth it he would put her in a jail and wouldn't let her get out or marry someone else. He would say, "I won't let you be free and comfortable. You can only marry with my permission." The one who wanted to marry this woman had to give some money to this man in order to get permission from him. In reality, they would buy and sell women. They would insult them and treat them very badly. They even used to be proud of themselves if they would kill a woman. They would believe that men and women have completely different reckoning [Persian = hesāb, i.e., account, reckoning].

Islam put man and woman on the same scale and said both of you are from one origin and unit [sic]. When you are from one unit your root is the same, your father and mother are the same, so you can't consider yourself superior to the other.

I have collected some verses in the Koran about women and I am going to read some for you . . . [reads from the Koran].

There are many verses about human rights - but about women their rights have been mentioned [in the Koran] and fixed the same as man. It says both of them have rights to live. Both of them have rights to be respected. They have to be loyal to each other and respect each other. But there is a point in Islam. It has divided the work. That means everyone according to his dignity, ability and mental structure is set to (ordained for) a type of work. If you come to class and see a group of students are good in mathematics and another group in natural science and others in literature you should divide them into three groups and each one to the area he is interested in and able to do the work. Otherwise, you would be cruel to them. Human beings have been created along the same principles - i.e., the structure of man is different from that of woman. This has been said in all the books which have been written about human structure. From a physical, mental or psychological view, all have agreed there is a difference between man and woman. For this reason, they have a different duty.

The structure of man has to carry a different responsibility than the structure of woman. He can be successful in one way and she can be in the other way. If we ask her to do his work, we have eliminated him from his work and vice versa, and none of them can do the job well. We don't need a lot of proof to accept this because from the time that human beings have been created to now, no one could say that the structure of man and

woman are not different. So their duties are different. For example, you have a car which can carry a 10 ton load and another car can carry only a 5 ton load. You cannot load both of them with the same amount. If they ask you why, you will say because their structures are different. One has less capacity than the other. So we have to be just about this. As a result, we have to see what kind of work a woman and a man can do. We have to see what kind of work she is fit to do and he is fit to do. Islam has said, because you have different structures, you have to divide the work. It says man and woman have to make a social group by the name of family. One is husband and the other is wife. It is surprising that Islam hasn't preferred the husband to the wife. The Koran does not say that one is preferred to the other. It says you two - both of you - have to make a family. You use him and he will use you. As you have caused her to love you so she will cause you to love her. It doesn't say man is superior to woman. These two have to create an environment so they can love each other and as a result they produce children. So the structure of a woman's body is in such a way that it attracts men. God has given women the power to attract a man's heart and give him love and attention so he forgets his unhappiness and fatigue. She can make the home environment very pleasant. Man then will go into society and work and take care of family needs.

You may say that the woman can do this too. She can go and work and be active in society, as we see every day. This is, of course, possible and I accept it but there are two things here. First, what is a woman's job? She may go into society and work and doesn't change and nothing happens - but we are not talking about one woman only. We talk about women in general. We talk about women's characteristics. As long as she has lustful and carnal desires with the lustful and carnal desires in men - men cannot do their work and activities. Instead, they will be occupied with the beauty that women present to them. Nobody can be as effective over men as women. This characteristic has been given to women by God.

No matter how strong and active a man is, he will finally get tired and when he does he needs a place to rest and give him comfort. But a woman at work has a lot of men to show off to. She can attract a lot of attention and therefore she won't have any left for her own man. There are other men who are answering her love. Then how can this woman make a warm environment for her family?

Once a foreigner who was a Christian asked me if I like the type of marriage that they do. I said no. He asked me why. I said, "Because you don't marry until you are 35, 40, 45 years old. All this time, you have friends with whom you can satisfy yourself with sexually. You can do the things to your friends that you should do with your wife. After 30 - 45

years of age you decide to get married. That means out of 10 or 20 girl friends that you have you will chase one. That girl also pretends she only has one friend. Well, this is the time [i.e., after marriage, G.T.] that your sexual desire is diminishing and you cannot satisfy your wife. So, in order to satisfy herself she either becomes very nasty to you or she will find a lover for herself. Why do you have a day as "woman's day"? It means women can be free and can do anything she wants to do. She can satisfy herself sexually. No! This is wrong. If you go even to a primitive society they don't like this idea either. Even in civilized countries - those who have statistics have said that they have to examine the girls and boys first before they get married because if the girl has been with many men it will cause her to be sick. It causes her uterus to be upset. Her uterus should only be acquainted with one man, so she can have healthy children. Then, when you let women go to society she will be with different men.

Women also have a sense of imitation. When she sees different people she will be interested in this and that and as a result she will lose her interest about her own husband. Then you will have an argument every day, so you decide to let each other go free. You will get a girl friend and she will have a boy friend for herself. Then where do you think the child is going to be made? He said, "You Iranians are like this." I said, as far as the law is concerned, we are not like this, but in action we are like you. He said, "Why?" I said, "The law of Islam says when a man reaches puberty, he should get married. The same for girls. So it gives the man and woman a chance to release their sexual feelings and at the same time they produce healthy children. Then when they get old they both get old at the same time. Meanwhile, their children are grown up and they can help their parents. This is something natural." He said, "Then why don't you Iranians follow what your religion says?"

I said, "Unfortunately, we have followed you like a blind man because we thought you are [from] a progressive country and everything you do is good. This caused us to suffer bad fortune. Right now, it has been proved in the world that since women have been allowed to work . . . [didn't finish sentence]. As that great French philosopher says, "Any misfortune that happens, a woman is always behind it." Why? Because women have a sense of attracting men so they cause revolution, suffering and disaster in society. All corruption starts from women. They don't let men do the job and they themselves don't do the job either. As a learned woman said, "I could do everything in my life except attract a man's heart." Why? Because she was busy with her work and didn't do her woman's work.

So, Islam has a right conception of women. It says a woman can improve in knowledge as much as she wants. She can improve in technology, literature, business. She doesn't need to have her husband do these things for her. She is free. But she should be free in her own self. Her association with men causes a lot of problems. I don't mean when there are men in a place women are not supposed to be there. I mean they shouldn't have relationships. For this reason, Islam has provided love and kindness between members of a family so people be kind to each other. Otherwise, a man will go his way as it is today, and a woman will go her way. I don't know if this explanation is enough for you or do you have more questions.

Gus: You talked about the French philosopher, that he said all the problems come from women. Is this Islam's idea too?

S.T.: No.

Gus: Do you believe that the woman who comes out of the house without wearing the chador [face and body covering worn in Muslim countries] and causes the man to get excited is the guilty one or is it the man's fault too?

S.T.: Society. In society, anything that happens is not individual's fault. Society's education should be proper. If you train your child right, you will get a good result or vice versa. Of course, you are the one to be blamed if you don't train your child right. It is the parent's fault. Do you understand?

Gus: Yes.

S.T.: It is the same also about your question. That means, if a woman tries to make herself up in order to interest a man, if the man resists her and doesn't show his interest toward her, she wouldn't do it any more. Badness is always from both sides. For example, if I steal something and you don't smile at me and don't forgive me and try to punish me, I will never steal again. But if I know everything will be forgiven with one smile, I will do it again. If your child steals an apple one day from a shop and if you hit his hands, he will not become a thief and vice versa.

A woman's condition [physical make-up?] is against the principles of society. When she comes out she causes all men to stop their work and follow her. This is a natural feeling which a man has. If a man denies this feeling, he has denied his conscience. If you put ice near fire it will melt. Nobody can say I can prevent the ice from melting when it is near fire. It is impossible. God has created man and woman and has given them instinct or nature for preserving mankind. In order to keep the world going, God has given these two a sense to attract each other so they produce children. If this attraction happens in the right time and place, they will have healthy, religious

and good children. Otherwise, they won't have any children or the situation will get bad. Don't you see what has happened to the civilized world? All your commercials and advertisements are based on girls' pictures. That means lustfulness, lasciviousness has conquered today's world. It means women have attracted the hearts of men so much that even in technical affairs they have to start from lust. This is a big sin and we can not blame one person. The whole of society is sinful and is blameworthy.

Gus: Yes, but . . .

S.T.: Of course, I have to mention something else too. I don't mean that women have to wear such and such a chador or covering. No, they should wear a kind of clothing that doesn't stimulate men. It doesn't matter if her clothing is a long dress, or pants with a blouse as long as it doesn't stimulate men and doesn't cause a man who is going to his work to change his way and follow her. Of course, men also are to be blamed. In today's world they are using women as an instrument for releasing their sexual pleasure.

As I said, everything has two sides. One is excess and the other is dissipation. If you give someone the thing he deserves this is justice. If you give him a little less than what he deserves this is waste and if you give him more this is excess. If a child is in the sixth grade and we put him in the 12th grade this is waste. He won't be able to continue. Women are the same. She can not control herself in society. She will stimulate men and won't let them work. But, if she changes her environment and has a baby on time she can become learned, and everything about her will be good. She will work in her way and he works in his. They don't have anything to do with each other.

Islam has said that if these two are in the same way, none of them can do their work. Each one has a responsibility and combination of these two will produce a family and each member of this family will produce another family and all of them will be kind and friendly to each other.

When Islam came, women's situation changed too. A man came to the Prophet and became a Muslim. Then he told the Prophet that he has done something which will never be forgiven. He said that once his wife was pregnant and she delivered a girl but she told her husband that the child is dead and she sent the baby to her family to be raised because she was afraid her husband would kill the child because it is a girl and not a boy. Some 12 or 13 years later the man went to the woman's tribe and saw a pretty girl and asked who she is. His wife thought her husband had fallen in love with his own daughter so she told him the whole story. But the cruel father thought to himself that in a few days she has to marry someone and this is going

> to be a big shame for him that a stranger sleeps with his daughter. So he took her into the desert and despite her begging to him, he threw her in a well and killed her. In contrast, the Prophet of Islam was proud of his daughter Fatima. He said, anyone who likes her is the same as he likes me, and the one who likes me likes God. The Prophet raised the prestige of women - very high. Islam allowed a woman to reach her moral improvement. It has removed the thorns which were in her way, in the street, the marketplace or in the mosque. Islam cut away the thorns. Islam says women are very delicate and she will get in danger very easily. They must protect her so she can go in her right way and reach the perfect ideal.
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> When a woman is in the right channel she can do great things. Of course, there are minor differences between man and woman. They have different duties that they have to carry and a combination of both a man and a woman will make a happy family. Islam hasn't forbidden women from work, but it should be in their own way. I don't know if this is enough for you or not.

It is not unusual, according to my informants, for the wives of bazaar tradesmen to be beaten. "If a woman goes out of the house without her husband's permission, the husband feels he has the right to beat her." The woman informant who related this to my wife indicated also that a wife has little choice but to accept the domination of her husband.

> Perhaps some [of these women] have become aware [of new laws in Iran allowing women the right of divorce], but they are few. Most of them cannot support themselves. If their husbands don't feed them, they cannot do it themselves. This is why they are forced to obey their husbands. . . . Some of them may go back to their parents, but she won't have the same respect as when she was a girl [the term dushizeh was used, indicating a virgin]. Of course, if their parents are still alive they will take care of them; but if - God forbid - they are not alive and a brother has to take care of her, it would be very difficult for her because his wife will cause problems. If she goes to her sister's house, there will be problems also. So they prefer to be in their husband's home and put up with tyranny (zolm). In old times they used to say, "The girls have to go to their husband's house with a black chador [veiling] and leave with a shroud."

As I have indicated, educational opportunities are increasing for the daughters of bazaaris. As they finish high school, greater opportunities are becoming available for the woman to support herself and her children in the event she seeks a divorce from her husband. Such education is still relatively rare, however, among bazaar families. In addition, it is difficult for a woman to obtain a job and if she does, the most she could expect is some kind of clerical or secretarial position. For a woman to go without veiling and work together with strange men in an office is akin to prostitution in the eyes of religiously conservative bazaaris. Such views act as a strong deterrent to many women who seek outside employment. The problem is even more severe should the woman be divorced, for she is considered to be easily available to any man who wishes her. This view is not that of religiously conservative bazaaris alone, but is shared by educated, middle class, edaris. They also have negative views of the role of women in society, or at least many of them do. Take for example the following comments made to me by a number of young men - all in their mid-thirties - who were the sons of bazaar merchants. One had a university education and worked in a government office. Another spent a number of years in Europe attending various universities where he studied business and economics, although he never got a degree. He returned to Iran, opened an import-export office in the bazaar (his father was a tradesman selling watches) and generally was highly successful. A third was an engineer working for the municipality of Tehran, who had obtained his degree in the United States.

While I found strong conservative attitudes toward women among these young men and others I interviewed, other attitudes and opinions expressed by these men were quite modern and progressive. Comments such as ". . .

modern girls don't even give their breasts to their children; this is very, very bad"; "Modern girls are after money; they deceive men and they go with many boys"; and "Women have always been free in Islam, but they want to go naked in the streets" were very common in the interviews. One of them said that he has a relative who is "modern" and married but who is always criticizing her husband by saying "I could have married my cousin and been wealthy. Why did I marry you?" "These modern women don't do housework; they don't clean or raise their children properly." The conclusion to be drawn from such statements seems to be that they condemn what they cannot have. The costs of getting married are rather high in urban Iran and a great many men marry at a later age. As a result there is a great deal of sexual frustration.[14] In condemning "modern" girls they find a ready source of support in the traditional Islamic attitude toward women and use this view as a way of justifying and rationalizing to themselves their inability to cope with changed circumstances. They have not yet developed the psychological (and financial) resources to adapt to new patterns of behavior which are occurring in Iran as it modernizes and westernizes. As a result, many of them still prefer to allow their parents or sisters to find a girl for them as a way of avoiding the traumatic experiences of heterosexual encounter. Indeed, two of the three young men interviewed were married within a year. Both of the marriages had been arranged by the parents and the young men had not known the girls prior to their marriage. Both girls, incidentally, were rather timid and shy daughters of bazaar merchants who also agreed to such a match.

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[14]An Iranian psychiatrist of my acquaintance told me that three of the major or basic causes of neurosis among Iranians he has treated are (1) insecurity; (2) impotent anger or anger which cannot legitimately be expressed against the source of frustration; and (3) sexual deprivation.

Generally, sons are theoretically quite free in choosing a suitable marriage partner; whereas, daughters are still somewhat constrained. They are no longer directly forced into marriage - their views are taken into consideration - but, as was related to me, "Most of the time they listen to their parents." I know of one case where the parents accused their daughter of being a prostitute and a "loose woman" because she refused a suitor. In tears she denied this and accepted her parents' wishes.

Summary

One of the most prevalent features of the world view of the bazaar tradesmen is their negative attitudes toward the role of women in society. The Koranic ideal is often stated to indicate there is no discrimination toward women - in fact, it was often pointed out by informants that the status of women was raised with the coming of Islam and that women are much better off today than they were in pre-Islamic Arabia. Nevertheless, the ideal soon breaks down as one converses further with informants. As the interview indicates, there is indeed a clear recognition of the duties of men and those of women and the interpretation of the proper role of women in society is the prerogative of the man - be it a woman's father, brother, or a religious leader in the community.

Some tradesmen have allowed their daughters to study and increasingly girls are able to get a good education. Despite these advances, however, women in Iranian society still suffer from a rather generalized and negative conception of their role in society and as individuals. For various reasons, which it was not possible to discuss in this dissertation, Iranian men project their own lustfulness and sexual desires onto women who are seen, then, as the very embodiment of carnal pleasures and desire. In the

religious sphere sexuality is perceived as a distraction from the straight path of God, something which leads men astray. In order to ensure that men are not led astray, women are veiled and confined to their homes and generally kept apart from greater social participation. As the religious values associated with sexuality decrease in importance in Iran, so Iranian women are being given a greater role to play in society. Much of this change is due to increased secular education initiated during the reign of Reza Shah in the 1930's.

Education and Religious Training

Among the older generation of bazaaris, that is, those born and raised before the reign of Reza Shah, education for the common man in urban areas generally took place in a religious school or maktabkhaneh, which was supported by private contributions and religious endowments. Here, religious values and ritual behavior were stressed. Here, and at home, the child learned the proper prayer formulae and the special obligations of the Ramezan fast and the Muharram mourning period. Memorization of selected verses of the Koran and various works of Hafez and Sa'adi were emphasized as was the studying of the nasab or elementary Arabic text. In the maktabs of the bazaar such practical subjects as the use of the abacus, simple arithmetic and the intricacies of the siyaq method of notation (semi-coded form of arithmetical reckoning, still used by many tradesmen), as well as the differences and uses of various weights and measures, were taught as well.

The learning of foreign languages and other aspects of western civilization was the prerogative of the elite (and by default minority groups such as the Jews and Armenians). One of my bazaari informants recalled

that during his youth the attitude of the religious leaders was such that they would refer to anyone who dared try to study a European language as a kafar (disbeliever). He specifically mentioned an incident where a Jewish teacher was brought to teach French to the brother of his maternal aunt's husband and was beaten by the young men of the neighborhood. "I was very little at that time but I still remember his bloody face. I asked what his fault was and I was told he has two faults (gonah, used only in relation to religious conceptions; otherwise the word for fault is ayb): one is because he is a Jew and the second is because he teaches French." Another informant who was discussing the economic role and success of Jewish merchants in the bazaar commented, somewhat ruefully, "At the time when our fathers would prevent us from going to school because they believed we would become without religion, the Jews would send their children outside the country especially to London, France and America. If you notice most of the sons of these Jews now have important jobs in this country and they have the financial situation of this country in their hands."

Of course, there were isolated historical instances of contact with European culture such as the policy of the nineteenth century prime minister Amir Kabir of sending bazaar craftsmen to Europe to learn modern techniques or the establishment of the Dar-ul Funun. Other merchants and their sons had contact with representatives of foreign firms, but these merchants were largely Jewish and Armenian and only infrequently Muslim. The majority of bazaar children were obliged to pursue a traditional education which, along with other factors, inculcated strongly prescriptive religious norms which led to a high degree of social conformity within the various social groups. It was in such an environment that the world view and style of life of the majority of bazaaris in Tehran today was formed.

With the coming of Reza Shah Pahlavi to power the government began a determined policy of weakening the power and influence of the religious institution in the social life of Iran while trying to modernize the country. The judicial system was remodeled and based largely on European legal codes. The educational system was taken from the hands of the clergy with religious schools, for the most part, being replaced by secular schools in which religion became a minor part of the curriculum. "My children have not learned anything about the Koran in school. Whatever they have learned, it is from home." Such is the lament of one bazaar tradesman whose children attend public school. The government also maintains a firm control over the mass media - radio, television and all publications - and has infiltrated many informal interest groups which alone might provide an uncensored communication outlet to the people.

The present younger generation of Iranians, that is, those born and raised at the height of Reza Shah's power in the mid-1930's, were brought up in a much different social environment than their fathers. As one young son of a bazaar merchant phrased it, "My father and I are different from the point of view of our teachers. . . . He has been with the rohaniyun who have been in past times, and I, for example, contact rohaniyun who are very new." (sic)[15] While most of the older generation of bazaaris rarely went past the sixth class of elementary school or finished the maktabkhaneh, the majority of children of these same men today are finishing high school with a sizeable number going on to the university either in Iran or abroad. Marvin Zonis provides some material

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[15] Rohaniyun means literally, "the spiritual ones" and is synonomous with ulama which means "the learned ones."

to back up this assertion. In a survey of the present political elite of Iran (91% of whom had a university degree), Zonis found that of 29 respondents whose fathers were merchants (about 12% of total of 156 respondents) 86.2% of those merchants had had a maktab education and of the 20 whose fathers were members of the ulama 100% of them had had a maktab education (1971:234). Thus, despite a rather traditional educational background on the part of their fathers, these men were presumably not inhibited from pursuing further education. In another article discussing the foreign educated Iranian, George Baldwin (1963) reveals several pertinent facts. Of 387 respondents who studied abroad, nearly a third were the sons of merchants but of those only 7% followed in their fathers' profession.

> Merchants constitute much the largest class of fathers, being twice as common as landlords. It is unlikely that merchants have consciously tried to prepare their sons for mercantile life by giving them foreign training, since so few of the sons have pursued this calling (ibid.:268).

The merchants here referred to are, for the most part, the wealthier tajer-type merchants and perhaps some of the wealthier tradesmen. The average tradesmen can only afford to send their children through public school (elementary and secondary) and possibly university in Iran. In the not too distant past (thirty years ago or so) many bazaar tradesmen refused to allow their children to study beyond the sixth class of elementary school for fear that they would "lose their religion."

Today there are relatively few bazaaris who restrict their children's education to six years of primary school or less.

> Of course there are always foolish people everywhere who refuse to allow their sons to study, such as Mr. Sistani who told me that he is not going to let his children study because they

> will lose their religion. I told him no, they will have their eyes opened and can see where they are going. . . . These days, the ulama teach (word used was tabligh, "propagandize") that children should be sent to study. Even the theological students today study foreign languages.

In the article by Baldwin mentioned above he notes that in his sample of foreign-educated Iranians, one in twenty of the fathers was a clergyman. None of the returned sons entered the clergy, however. Baldwin evinces surprise at the "apparent willingness of many clergy to have sons study abroad and their ability to finance this" (ibid.:268). The ulama of today have changed somewhat from the ulama of the past and it is not surprising that the ulama relized that in order for Iran and Islam to be free of foreign domination, Iranians must have knowledge equal to or better than their perceived adversaries.

In any case, bazaar tradesmen today are not afraid to send their children to school for fear of losing their religious beliefs.

> They let them go but at the same time they have them under their control. Usually, they [i.e., father and sons] go to religious gatherings [hay'at] together. For example, Engineer Bazargan was allowed to be educated and he became an engineer yet he also attended religious gatherings and is still very religious.[16]

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[16]Engineer Bazargan exemplifies many things to the bazaar merchants. Aside from the above point, Engineer Bazargan has been active in speaking against the government and was arrested in the disturbances during Muharram, 1963, along with Haj Sayyid Mahmud Taliqani, both of whom were sentenced to 10 years imprisonment. For some of Taliqani's statements at the time see my "Religious Symbolism and Social Change: The Drama of Husain" in N. Keddie (ed.) Scholars, Saints and Sufis University of California Press, 1972. For a discussion of some of Bazargan's views, see Lambton (1964).

Most pious bazaaris realize that their children will learn little about religion in the public schools despite the fact that religion is one of the compulsory subjects taught, as is Arabic. As the above quote from an informant indicated, most bazaaris rely on private training in the home and at religious gatherings to instill in their children a religious faith. Others who cannot accept this division into two spheres send their children to the growing number of private religious schools usually built and supported by pious bazaar merchants. The latest advances in physics, chemistry, mathematics, auto mechanics and other technical subjects are taught along with formal lessons in Arabic and the principles and practices of Shi'a Islam. The teachers are both well-educated clergymen and highly professional laymen. I have visited several of these schools and their facilities equal the best in any North American high school.

Neither the public, government supported elementary and high schools nor the private, religiously oriented schools are coeducational. Only universities in Iran are coeducational. In the past (i.e., pre-Reza Shah) girls had no formal education. The daughters of bazaar tradesmen and merchants remained in the home learning household duties such as sewing, cooking and housecleaning. Some instruction was given in the memorization of the Koran but no attempt was made to teach them Arabic nor for them to understand the meaning of what they had memorized. Merely the recitation of the Koran was considered religiously meritorious (savab). If the family had money or the father was somewhat "enlightened" (roshanfekr was the word used by informants) an akhund or a molla baji was hired to teach the girl or the father himself would teach the child some Arabic so as to be able to read the Koran or some of the various prayer books.

Despite the common view generally held in the West, women have always had a role to play in the teaching of Islam, at least in Iran. E. A. Bayne has stated that the "Muslim clergy has never included women in any role" (1968:53). It is not clear what is meant by this statement since there is no formal clergy in Islam and therefore no formal roles to be filled in a religious hierarchy. In Muslim societies learning is a great virtue - the extent of one's knowledge of religion and related subjects - and women as well as men have achieved great learning in Islam. This is especially true of women mystics. Levy, quoting Farid al-Din 'Attar, ranks Rābi'a as one of the greatest saints of Islam (1962:132) and Levy speaks later of "the pride of womankind" - Shuhda bint al-Ibari who "by her attainments acquired a great reputation and ranked among the first scholars of her age" (ibid.:133). Henri Corbin, perhaps the leading western scholar of Shi'ism notes that the great Muslim theologian and Sufi Ibn 'Arabi was himself taught by two women shaikha - Yasmin of Marchena and Fatima of Cordova (1969:40). In Iran some women (usually of wealthier families or of "enlightened" parents) have been able to attain religious learning through the system of private tutoring taught either by a male member of the ulama or an educated female. There have been maktabkhaneh for girls where the teacher has been a molla baji instead of an akhund. The term molla baji refers to a woman trained in religious subjects and who (1) teaches girls privately in religious subjects and (2) acts as a rozeh khan for women audiences during commemorative gatherings for Husain and (3) perform other, similar services at other types of gatherings such as the various sofreh (religious gatherings held to honor a vow). The most famous molla baji in Tehran today is a woman by the name of Khanum Katouzian (about 57 years old). She has given us some indication of her

background in an article in a popular woman's magazine:

> I was educated to the fourth class of primary school since my father opposed my education [her father was one of the ulama]. He himself used to teach us. I read some fiqh [Islamic law] with him. After that I studied with Haj Sayyed Hasan Mousavi. For three years now I have been at Husainiyeh Ershad under the direction of Mr. Shahcheraqi (Zan-i Ruz 1347/1968)[17]

Khanum Katouzian gives sermons to women. "Because she wants to attract women to attend her sermons she doesn't insist they wear the chador [but] merely that they wear a scarf or some other type of head-covering." She has opened a religiously oriented elementary school (dabestān-i din va dānesh) for girls and several of her students have gone on to higher education getting university degrees in such subjects as education and Arabic.[18] Other of her students continue to study with her or other religious leaders privately and some have become molla bajis in their own right. In response to a question as to whether she receives khoms and zakat (religious alms), I was told that "of course she says she doesn't accept this but women give it to her and tell her to give it to anyone whom she knows who is poor and needy." It might be noted here that the term molla baji as used in Tehran today does have some negative overtones. The term baji is derived from the Turkish and means "sister" but the term has come to be used in spoken Persian to refer to a female servant. It would seem that as the usage of the term baji extended to

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[17] Husainiyeh Ershad is a meeting or conference hall with functions similar to a mosque but catering to a younger, more "modern" group who wish to get away from the negative stereotype which the mosque has in the minds of many Iranians.

[18] It might be noted that such private, religiously oriented schools, largely supported by bazaar tradesmen, are more common for girls than for boys.

cover a term of reference for servant with highly negative connotations its use in the religious sphere (where it originally had high status implications, at least among women) correspondingly decreased and the term is increasingly being discontinued. Elizabeth Fernea provides a brief discussion of women mullas in a village in Southern Iraq (1969:114-115) and she and her husband Robert Fernea provide an extensive discussion of this role in Keddie (1972).

Little by little the daughters of bazaar merchants and tradesmen are becoming educated. Even illiterate parents are sending their daughters to school. In an interview with the wife of a bazaar merchant, I was told that many of these women were taught that it is a sin (gonah) for girls to be educated but that today,

> . . . by association with other people she will get to understand more. These days, first they send their daughters to elementary school, then they give in and accept the idea that she should go to high school. At this time the girls themselves are becoming more aware and insist that they should go to the university. Often, the girl will send different people to her parents to convince them that she should go to the university [usually an uncle or someone else in the family who is more educated or understanding and who can persuade the father]. The parents at the same time will see other people have done this and they have been successful and so they agree.

Summary

Education, then, for the majority of bazaar tradesmen followed the traditional pattern of religious education supplemented by some basic skills necessary for a commercial life in the bazaar. Such religious training was not only formal in the sense that it occurred in the maktab but informal in that the child learned to pray and observed and participated in family rituals such as the Ramezan fast and the Muharram mourning practices

commemorating the death of Husain. During such services the child sat with his elders and also helped serve the guests refreshments. It was in such an environment that the world view and style of life of the majority of the tradesmen of the bazaar was formed.

The children of these men, however, are increasingly being educated in public, government-operated schools where religious values are strongly de-emphasized. In order to try to counteract this tendency, bazaar tradesmen finance the construction of private, religiously oriented schools where not only religious subjects are taught but also the latest advances in the physical and natural sciences. In addition, the majority of pious tradesmen bring their sons to religious gatherings, especially hay'ats and ritual narrations (rozeh) commemorating the martyrdom of the Shi'a Imams, especially Husain. As the sons reach their early teens many of them no longer wish to attend such religious gatherings and there is some degree of tension between the generations, a point I will discuss later.

Daughters in the past received some religious instruction but little else, although the situation is changing rapidly. Nevertheless, there are still strongly conservative and largely negative conceptions of the role of women in society as the next section points out.

Occupational Succession and Generational Differences

As I mentioned earlier, a man is generally more interested in his sons than in his daughters - a characteristic that is partly reflected in the limited education generally given to girls. There is, however, no pressure on the sons of bazaar merchants or tradesmen to take up the occupation of the father. Informants noted that sons generally follow those occupations where they are the happiest and can make money whether this is in the

bazaar and commerce in general or outside the bazaar in government offices or private enterprise. When I questioned tradesmen about their occupation and that of their fathers, the responses varied. One merchant (thirty-eight years old with only six years of elementary school) whose father was a carpet broker (dalal-i farsh) in Kashan became a broker for grocery goods. He used to bring goods from Tehran to Kashan as well as to Shiraz. He soon wearied of traveling back and forth between these cities, especially since the roads were bad and transportation inadequate. Up to only a few years ago it used to take several days to travel the distance between Tehran and Shiraz. Since his father was in the carpet business and he himself was born and raised in Kashan and knew the price and weaving of carpets, he decided to give up being a broker in grocery goods and become a carpet merchant. He had several friends also in the carpet business, one of whom pooled resources with him and they started business in the bazaar of Tehran about six years ago. This was an informal arrangement and not an officially recognized partnership. After a few years he made enough money to establish an enterprise on his own.

Another person interviewed, a man of about 60, indicated that his father also had been a carpet merchant in the town of Saveh and he himself had had a shop in Saveh up to about 12 years ago. His father used to bring carpets from Tabriz and so my informant had contacts in Tabriz and continued this specialty of selling Tabriz carpets in Tehran. The reason he gave for following in his father's footsteps was that he "didn't know any other work." He indicated also, in response to a question of what type of work he would do if he could live his live over, that he would "follow the same work again and wouldn't choose any other" since "I have benefitted a lot in the carpet business." This was a fairly common

response in my interviews.

Still another informant indicated that his father was not a carpet merchant but that he felt he would like to become a carpet merchant and began as a shop assistant to a merchant, liked the business and continued on. Another carpet merchant commented that the sons of carpet merchants today don't like their fathers' occupation "because the work is more than the income." Older sons are more likely than younger sons to follow their father's work but even here estimates given were that only 10-15% of young men would choose the same work as their fathers. On the other hand, I found it more usual for the son of another type of bazaar tradesman to seek work as a carpet merchant. Informants explained this by saying "he thinks it is a big job and it has a lot of income, so he switches to selling carpets hoping to make more money." This particular informant went on to clarify what happens to the sons of carpet merchants. "As I said, only 10-15% of them will stay in the bazaar because the bazaar environment suits them, it is their ideal place. But 85% of them will choose another occupation outside of the bazaar." Another informant estimated that some 70% or more of the sons of bazaar tradesmen leave the bazaar while the remainder choose various occupations within the bazaar or remain in their fathers' businesses. The overall figures remain fairly consistent regarding the percentage of the younger generation who leave the bazaar. Judging from some of the examples these informants gave as well as other information, it seems that many of the younger generation are moving out of the bazaar environment because it is crowded and dirty, while their general social attitudes and business skills are changing. In addition, the bazaar is becoming a wholesale and export center and those seeking work as retailers move into shops on the main thoroughfares of the city.

Some of these young men have a university degree, usually in business or economics from Iran or abroad and apply new techniques and marketing methods. One informant whose father was a shoemaker in the bazaar went to the London School of Economics and returned to Iran where he joined a government ministry. He works in a particular office of that ministry where he has access to, among other things, privileged information regarding government import-export policies. Partly because of this knowledge his elder brother and their father have built up one of the largest manufacturing firms in Iran, which is also one of the largest exporting firms. Much of the information received in his privileged government position is passed on to his family where they can take advantage of the market situation before any of the competition has had a chance to learn of new government policies, incentives or economic regulations. Also, because of the new marketing skills learned abroad, this informant has been able literally to revolutionize the marketing of that particular product in Iran. Basically, their company avoided the use of middlemen who were responsible for finding retail outlets for the goods. Instead, they set up company-owned retail outlets and sold direct from the factory through their own retail outlets to the consumer, thus avoiding the traditional broker. This example was so successful that other major manufacturers of that product followed suit.

Ali-Akbar Tala'i, who has two sons studying in the U.S., will admit, if pressed, that there is indeed an exodus from the bazaar. He himself has a second shop on Pahlavi Avenue outside the bazaar. Not that he is losing money, indeed, he is one of the more successful shopowners in the bazaar thanks to new sales techniques that include acceptance of American Express and Diners Club cards. Since he caters to tourists he finds it advantageous to have two of his other sons help out in the shop with their

almost fluent English. Tala'i comes from a traditional carpet family but about twenty-five years ago or so decided to branch out into the line of Iranian handicrafts which was then becoming popular. These included turquoise trinkets, beaten copper and brass ware, silver and gold, and, in the family tradition, an occasional carpet. We can see then, that Tala'i himself chose a different occupation from his father when opportunities arose. His own sons, at least two of them, have gone abroad for their university education and in all likelihood will become professionals of one kind or another. Tala'i himself is not averse to changes in business techniques when he can benefit from them. Of course the type of enterprise he has - catering to foreign tourists - is much more suited to credit card arrangements and other similar innovations than the majority of retail establishments in the bazaar which cater to a local population.

The majority of young men who do leave the bazaar take up government employment in one form or another. One of the main causes of this is their repudiation of everything the bazaar stands for. Increasingly, young men seek cleaner and more sanitary areas in which to live and work, with all the amenities of a modern way of life. They reject many, if not most, of the superstitions and assumptions associated with the interpretation of Islam by bazaaris and most of the ulama with whom they associate. As they reject a style of life, so they also reject trade which has epitomized that way of life. They seek a new value system which has, for the most part, been embodied in the modernizing policies of the government and its agencies. The father/son conflict which appears so evident in the bazaar in relation to commercial practices and decision-making is evidence of the growing gap between the older generation and the newer generation.

Among tradesmen much of the father/son conflict takes the form of disputes over decision-making and the relative independence of a mature son to participate in decisions affecting the nature and future of the enterprise. One informant, about seventy years old, whose second eldest son - a man of about thirty-three - assisted his father in the business, told me:

> If the son of a bazaari does follow in his father's business and he is intelligent enough and able to do things, the father will hand over responsibility and decision-making in business to him and if he is not intelligent enough, he won't. In this case, of course, they will have a conflict. This is natural - they think differently. The boss in an office thinks one way and the doorman thinks another. In any argument one will be the loser and the other the winner. It depends on their power. This is natural. When the son is dependent on the father's wealth, he won't amount to anything. He won't develop initiative and self-reliance and is therefore worthless.

While I know the individuals involved fairly well, I think the father has underestimated the ability of his own son, presuming of course that these general remarks have some reference to his own situation. The fact that he implicitly compares a boss to the father figure on the one hand and the doorman to the son on the other, is not without great significance in pointing out the various attitudes involved in father/son conflict. Since economic and professional opportunities have become greater in Iran and sons have greater alternatives available in choosing other occupations, one might think that father/son conflict would thereby be lessened. On the contrary, one of the numerous social consequences of this widening of opportunities is the increasing economic independence of sons which has had the corollary effect of reducing the power and authority of the father in the home.

Often, especially if the father is a small tradesman or kaseb, the sons may earn more than their fathers and may contribute more to the support of the household. As a result, they either assume more and more decision-making functions thus displacing the role of the father in the home, or they become increasingly independent and indifferent to home and family obligations.[19] A prominent religious leader in the bazaar, while delivering a sermon criticized some of the discontinuities in the socio-cultural conditions in Iran and indirectly the government by stating: "If you have children of fifteen or sixteen they become independent, they won't give you any help. They get money from working in a factory and they don't care about you. They go out and do as they wish and the government cannot do anything because it wants democracy and freedom."

Many instances of generational conflict as a result of this power differential have become apparent as a result of my research. One anecdote was related to me by a bazaari in support of his contention that there was extensive father/son conflict in bazaar culture.

> A man was crying very profusely at a grave and minutes later began stamping and stomping on the grave. A passerby wondered at this strange behavior and asked the man why he was crying one minute and then stomping furiously on the grave the next. The man replied, 'I was crying because he was my son, and I was stomping on his grave because he was my competitor.'

It is interesting to speculate that much of the conflict between the more traditional southern section of the city of Tehran and the more modern northern sections of the city - in simple terms the conflict between the bazaari

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[19] This statement needs some qualification in that it is still generally the case that a young man who wishes to marry needs the financial support of his father. As a result, young men of marriageable age are usually quite deferent to their fathers and "toe the line" even well into their thirties and forties. Needless to say, they thoroughly resent this dependent status.

way of thinking and the edari way of thinking - is in reality merely a reflection of the father/son or generational conflict that seems so pervasive.

The differences that exist between generations are partly a matter of education - traditional maktab education versus a government supported secularized and "modernized" form of education. But the religious institution is changing also as we saw earlier in this chapter where an informant noted that he and his father differ in their approach to religion because their religious teachers had differed. We can see in the following example some of the similarities and differences that exist in one family with regard to attitudes toward trade as well as religion.

A family that in many ways is typical of bazaar families is that of Haj Sayyed Mohsen Khorasani. He is a man of sixty and extremely pious. He is also a good businessman and one of the wealthiest tradesmen in the bazaar. Because of his wealth and piety he is much respected in the bazaar and is often asked by the leading members of the ulama to act on their behalf when he travels to another city or to collect money for earthquake victims and oversee the distribution of such wealth in the disaster areas (which may often mean leaving his business during the period he engages in such charitable activities). He arranges rozeh gatherings, often with the purpose of soliciting money for religious schools and other such activities. In his business he is in partnership with his brother. Of his three sons, one is a merchant in the bazaar, another a traditional theology student in Qum, the main Shi'a theological center in Iran, and the third son is a university student at the University of Tehran. The eldest son is a merchant and has limited education, having studied only to the sixth class. He did not follow his father's specialization; instead, he opened a new line importing different types of goods from Japan. He also sells imported

electrical lamps and chandeliers but has recently opened his own factory in Iran for the production of these items and has been highly successful thus far. His father gave him money initially to start his career as a merchant and the fine credit rating of his father and their good name in the bazaar have been of enormous help in the success of his enterprises.

The second eldest son is a theology student who is immersed in religious activities. Like most theology students he is quite nationalistic and while he is fairly well educated and knowledgeable, his knowledge is generally of a rather traditional nature and interspersed with superstition and misinformation. For example, he believes that "by eating pork, people will get the characteristics of a pig, also from the point of view of sex, the pig has a strange effect. It has been experienced that those who eat pork meat become very sexy." His religious views are very positive toward trade and commerce. "It has been said that the merchant and tradesman are God's friends. When a person does business for a livelihood, it is just as if he fights for God." His view of commerce and Islam extends, however, to the justification of some trading practices that are not in accordance with my understanding of the intent of Islamic law, such as the practice of kolah shar'i. The meaning of this expression, as I mentioned earlier, is that by covering up the letter of the law the action is given the aura of permissibility. That is, the parties in question are not breaking the letter of the law, although they may be breaking the intent and spirit of the law. Such practices are fairly common in the bazaar where the merchants wish to maintain the image of piety while practicing the necessities of trade. One common practice is to borrow money from someone at a stipulated but unwritten interest rate. When the debt falls due, the debtor returns the amount of the capital and in handing over the

amount of the interest the creditor "sells" the debtor a handkerchief in return. As far as the letter of the law is concerned no interest was taken. The debtor merely "purchased" a handkerchief from the creditor for the amount of the interest. In any case, what is interesting is the attitude of this son toward commerce and commercial practices.

This view is quite at variance with that of the youngest son who is at the university. During field work this young man was in his final year of undergraduate studies majoring in Arabic. He is also an extremely pious young man, which accounts for his major in Arabic, but is willing to entertain the possibilities of change within the religious institution. Not however by changing doctrine, but rather in re-educating a new generation of Muslims through new and innovative teaching methods. He has hopes of continuing on to graduate school in physics (he has the qualifications to do so since he graduated in high school with a specialization in mathematics and physics). He has been active in working with various of the younger clergymen who share similar views. Together they have written and published (with economic support from pious bazaar merchants) small pamphlets for distribution to high school students indicating there is nothing in Islam that would in any way impede a scientific outlook and in fact, may even encourage such a view. In addition to these activities he teaches physics part-time in a religiously oriented school which was built with funds largely provided by bazaar merchants. After graduating from high school he worked for a while in the bazaar as a shop assistant to a friend of his father learning about trade and commerce. He did not like the business world and particularly was appalled and disillusioned by the business practices and ethics of the merchants with whom he came into contact.

> They [the bazaar merchants] manage to show interest is right according to Islamic law. They use kolah shar'i. I personally don't like it because it is not right. It is not the way Islam has said. But they do it through religion. Of course they consider themselves good Muslims. They really think the things they do are permissible from the point of view of Islam. When we think about the reason why interest is forbidden in Islam we will realize it is because God doesn't want people to become poor, so society is not destroyed, so all the money isn't accumulated in one place. That is why Islam has forbidden interest. But these days they don't consider these things. They only think about a way to get interest that is legal. Most of the bazaaris are religious. That is, they are the type who have contacts with religious leaders. That is why we expect a lot from them. When we see them do something wrong we get angry.

It is interesting then to see the different viewpoints expressed in the family of Sayyed Mohsen with regard to commercial practices in the bazaar. I know little of the business practices of the father but of what I do know I feel he would not engage in such religious pretense as that described above. Only one comment was made to me by another merchant indicating some relationship between religious belief and commercial necessity on the part of Haj Sayyed Mohsen. "Sayyed Mohsen is going to have business with a factory owned by a Jew. Perhaps Sayyed Mohsen will get a million tomans out of this business every year. He is a Muslim and very religious but he cannot deny this income." Although Muslims and Jews constantly do business together in the bazaar without any friction, there is the implication in the foregoing quote that would seem to indicate that a "truly" religious Muslim might not do business with a Jew and that if he did it would only be after the amount of money to be gained was so great that it could not be refused. Such a statement is partly borne out by the comments of another merchant who was discussing the possible conflict of interest between religious ethics and the necessities of trade and which would take precedence

in any given situation. "It depends how religious the person is. Some people ignore 100 or 1,000 tomans but when it gets to 100,000 they make a kolah shar'i for it. Still others will relinquish even 100,000 or 200,000 so they can follow the dictates of their religion. But everyone has his price."

The general feeling on the part of the younger generation is that much of the way of thinking of their fathers' generation is hypocritical. In particular, the older generation tries to justify much of their behavior according to the principles of Islam and provide interpretations to verses of the Koran and the hadith that serve their purposes. Much of this behavior is well meaning in that individuals seem, for the most part to really believe that what they are doing is acceptable according to Islam. Behavior such as kolah shar'i has become such an ingrained practice that little is made of it. To clarify this, it might be pointed out that such practices are not new and a result of the processes of westernization and modernization with an associated decline in piety and religiosity. On the contrary, from the very beginnings of Islam, Muslims found it necessary to be "practical" in certain circumstances where Islamic law was vague or not directly pertinent. Nikkie Keddie comments, for example, that:

> Although Islam was both a political and a religious guide, there was simply no precedent for most of the problems with which the caliphs and their administrators had to deal. And so, even the first four "pious" or "orthodox" caliphs adopted a largely ad hoc or "secular" policy - often simply taking over administrative and tax practices, as well as administrators and tax-collectors, from the conquered peoples, and dealing with new problems in a practical way" (1963:36; italics mine).

In a society where precedent is foremost it became necessary to justify these practices by associating them in one way or another with Islam and in

particular (since nothing could be found in the Koran to substantiate a given position) the sayings of the prophet (hadith). On the basis of careful research by Joseph Schacht (1959) and in particular Ignaz Goldziher (1952, 1958) it has become clear that the "vast majority of the hadiths were invented in the interests of various parties" (Keddie, op. cit.:36). The attribution of statements to the Prophet was supposed to provide divine sanction and therefore acceptability. Among the Shi'a this process was carried a step further where it became standard practice to attribute sayings not only to Muhammad but also to any one of the twelve Imams who succeeded Muhammad and particularly Ja'far as Sadeq the sixth Imam, who is believed by the Shi'a to be the principle codifier of Shi'a doctrine. In her article, Keddie elaborates on the invention of hadiths to show that such practices became acceptable "as long as they voiced sentiments which were generally considered edifying and favorable to piety"; and, "The 'authenticity' of a hadith was thus tied to what most of the community considered good, and typically, sayings of the Prophet were circulated to justify this concept:

> When I am no longer here . . . the words attributed to me will multiply, just as there have been attributed a large number of sentences to the prophets who preceded me. That which is presented to you as having been my words, you must compare with the book of God. . . . That which agrees with the Koran know that it is from me, whether I said it myself or not. (Keddie op. cit.:39 quoting Goldziher 1952:59)

Although Muslims today no longer need to invent hadith they do provide their own interpretations of religious writings and other aspects of Islam that are in accord with their own view of the world. The interview with the religious leader on the role of women in society which is presented in an earlier section is a case in point. The use of "legitimizing" practices such as kolah shar'i is perhaps another. Some bazaaris, for example, feel it necessary to justify a mistress in religious terms under the guise of a

sigheh relationship, whereas others outside the bazaar who may also have such a relationship feel no such compulsion.[20] Numerous other incidents have been noted in this work to amply support the contention that the younger generation feel such religious pretense (tazahor and riya were the words most often used) is hypocritical.

As a consequence the role model which the fathers often present to the sons is such that the younger generation loses interest in religion. The younger generation finds other nonreligious explanations for the course of events and no longer feels it necessary to explain or justify every action according to Islamic premises. As they lose interest in the interpretation of Islam as offered by their fathers and the ulama, they are criticized by their parents. Younger informants (sons of bazaar tradesmen) felt that their fathers often criticized them in order to "build themselves up in the eyes of the person they are talking to and from whom they may expect some benefit." By constantly criticizing their own sons' behavior (be it justified or not), especially in relation to a presumed laxity in religion, they build up an image in the eyes of alter that they themselves are very pious (that is, "my son may not be religious and say his prayers or attend religious gatherings, but as you can see and hear, I am"). The behavior of sons is often used as a foil against which the behavior of the

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[20] A sigheh marriage is a legitimate form of temporary marriage among the Shi'a, while it is forbidden by the Sunni majority in Islam. The Iranian government has recently forbidden the practice of temporary marriages but the religious leaders pay little attention to this. As one member of the ulama told me: "Sigheh is one of the useful rules in Islam, because not everyone can get married. Often there are problems in getting married such as the expense and other problems. But in sigheh you can do the work in one hour or one night without any problem. Someone reads sigheh [i.e., religious laws governing the arrangement] between these two and it is finished. This is a good rule since it prevents sin."

father is contrasted to advantage. Such behavior was interpreted by informants as having economic and other advantages for the father. When one questions the fathers about their sons they are quick to state that they do not mean their sons are no longer Muslim - this fact is accepted without question - rather "as we say, he [speaking of his son] is careless or remiss" (lā ābāli).

The term lā ābāli has quite negative connotations stressing indifference and unconcern to the point where the consequences are seen to have wider societal and not merely individual consequences. Witness the following statement:

> If they [the government] forbid this [i.e., sigheh marriages] then what should those people do [for sex] who cannot get married. They will become careless and indifferent (lā ābāli) like today's young people who cause a lot of degeneration and immorality (fasād) [the implication here is of promiscuous sex]. So sigheh marriages [in effect, religiously sanctioned prostitution as here discussed] is one way to prevent this sort of thing and it is very useful. It is religiously acceptable (halāl) in Islam and has religious blessings (savab) also.

What is being said here is that without some religious guidelines, even regarding sexual activities, behavior will result in promiscuous and lascivious behavior such as that supposedly practiced by the youth of Iran who no longer pay heed to religious injunctions. The youth on the other hand are religious in their own way. They may know little about the Imams of the Shi'a and have no desire to participate in the mourning ceremonies for Imam Husain, but they have a faith of sorts. It is difficult to define and might better be seen as a search for some ultimate reality (following Tillich's definition of religion) rather than a belief in the doctrines of Islam as understood by their fathers.

Summary

What seems to emerge from this section is a recognition among informants that changes are taking place in the bazaar which are reflected in the nature of religious interpretation.

Bazaar culture, while in many respects still maintaining a "traditional" orientation to the world, is changing. As the older generation passes on, new tradesmen, businessmen and religious leaders are taking their places - individuals who were raised in a radically different environment than that of their fathers. As a result of these changes the world view of the two generations clearly differs.

Generally it can be said that the style of life of the ulama is increasingly becoming unacceptable and does not win the respect and confidence of the people. In Islam, office does not automatically confer prestige or influence. The individual's own personal learning, piety and character are the main determinants of his standing. Since Iran has undergone an educational revolution, the basis of such learning and training has also been changed. Individuals with increasing education expect the ulama to keep well informed and aware of sociocultural dynamics in society if they wish to remain the interpreters of doctrine. For the most part, they have not kept pace and the younger generation is moving increasingly away from traditional Islam as practiced by their fathers. This does not necessarily mean they are becoming irreligious. On the contrary, the social, educational and economic changes that have been taking place in Iran in recent years are providing the present generation with the means to seek for themselves a new evaluation of the role of religion in their lives to fit in with their conception and understanding of modern life.

## Conclusion

The bazaar tradesmen conceive of themselves as a distinct status group within the city of Tehran. Their sense of distinctiveness tends to follow Weber's characterization of status groups as having particular economic and occupational interests, the maintenance of social distance and exclusiveness, shared religious beliefs and a distinctive, clearly articulated world view. The main factor which Weber stressed was the desire of particular status groups to maintain a distinctive "style of life" and the bazaar tradesmen of Tehran provide an excellent illustration of this cultural phenomenon. Indeed, Weber's whole analysis of the sociology of religion centered on the relationship between religious beliefs and the status and power of the various groups composing society. In a general sense this is what I have set out to investigate among the bazaar tradesmen of Tehran.

## CHAPTER THREE

## RELIGION AND TRADE

The reaction of men in all societies to the apparent complexity of the world around them has been to create a simplified and intelligible picture of the world. Weber understood this for he attributed to all men a basic drive toward meaning, toward comprehension of the world as in some way orderly and purposeful. Every individual's view of the universe must necessarily have some organization, structure or system. "Chaos cannot be lived with" (Redfield 1962:396). Not only must order be perceived in the universe but social interaction must be orderly, habitual and therefore, predictable (see Bateson, quoted by Rappaport 1971:69 and Kluckhohn 1965:153). In order for society to function with some degree of efficiency there must be at least a minimal agreement on the norms, values and beliefs associated with and guiding behavior. Such agreement, to the extent that it is reflected in non-random behavior, leads to predictable responses and behavioral expectations, and hence order in society. Deviations from norms and moral guidelines are dealt with by society to restore some sense of balance or orderliness in the system, however vaguely or ideally this may be conceived. Religious systems, especially in their use of myths and rituals, are one way of expressing beliefs about societal expectations. In Leach's view myths and rituals have a redundancy factor which help them express and revivify sentiments which sustain a moral order; they induce certain moods and sentiments and teach men to feel and also teach them what they ought to feel.

Order, predictability and confidence through mutual expectations

are, of course, values of great importance to traders. My informants expressed this idea by stating that "the only thing bazaar tradesmen want is security and they will provide this at any cost." Without security and order trading is impossible. If trust and confidence are totally absent the cost of exchange would be prohibitive since no one would be willing to enter into an exchange relationship without some sort of protection for his investment. One of the assumptions underlying this dissertation is, following Weber, that there is a close association between religion and trade and it would therefore be useful to look at some of the comparative material on this subject as a way of preparing for our further analysis of the role of religion in the lives of the bazaar tradesmen.

## Religion and Trade in Comparative Perspective

In the earliest recorded civilizations, religion, law, economics and philosophy were inextricably bound together, with the dominant element being, perhaps, religion. Sjoberg notes that markets and fairs have been associated with religious edifices since the ancient civilizations of Egypt and Mesopotamia (1960:269). The same is true for pre-Columbian and later Latin American cities or those of Tibet, China or medieval Europe,

> . . . as in the late Dark Ages in Europe, there was a certain safety in the shadow of religious buildings. As the cathedral offered sanctuary to the medieval trader, who held market before it on festival days, so the Greek and Asian temples afforded some guarantee of law and order. In temples, gold might be deposited and treaties filed. Priests acted as caretakers and judges in disputes. The Babylonian Shamash was one of the market-gods; originally too, Jehovah was market-god of the Tribe of Levi, at whose yearly festivals men of all tribes gathered to barter; Jehovah's priests were judges if

> altercations arose. The temple of Jerusalem was the center of a financial network in the Near East similar to that cast over Western Europe by the later Christian Church.
>
> Such sacred marketplaces were numerous. In the very midst of the lawless Scythian shepherds, merchants assembled to trade at a spot so holy that no weapons of war were needed; fugitives might find asylum there and umpires adjusted quarrels. The temple of Apollo at Delphi was one of the gold-deposits of antique times and a credit-giving institute as well; the interests of this temple-bank were on the side of peace, and frequently the Pythia, the Priestess of Apollo, sought to bring order among striving communities. If, as Goethe says, War, Trade and Piracy are triune and indivisible, it is also true that Religion, Law and Trade have been bound together from primordial times. . . . (Beard 1962: 167)

Weber says much the same:

> From of old, systems of religious ethics were directly employed for rational economic purposes, especially the purposes of creditors. This was especially true whenever the state of indebtedness legally involved the very person of the debtor, so that the creditor might appeal to the filial piety of the heirs. An example of this practice is the prohibition against pawning the mummy of the deceased in Egypt. Another example is the belief in many Asiatic religions that whoever fails to keep a promise, including a promise to repay a loan and especially a promise guaranteed by an oath, will be tortured in the next world and consequently will disturb the quiet of his descendents by evil magic (1964:218).

Abner Cohen's point that the oath on the sacred book which is administered in courts in legal proceedings in the West, "indicates, at least symbolically, the significance of ritual mechanisms in the organization of trust" (1969:85).

Sjoberg's explanation for the association of religious structure and trade is "that the church, mosque or temple is a focus of perambulation, and given the difficulties of travel to and fro within the city, the

religious center is a convenient spot for the interchange between buyer and seller. That religious holidays are also the chief market days is in keeping with this pattern" (ibid.). Sinha (1968:77) advances almost the exact opposite of this statement where he notes that a Hindu temple was built at the marketplace because "It is centrally located. Everyone comes to the marketplace, and even those who do not believe in religion [meaning the tribal folks] may see God [image] without extra effort" (Sinha's brackets).

Sjoberg's last point that religious holidays are also the chief market days is generally not true for the Middle East and certainly not Iran. His overall explanation is much too simplistic. By his phrasing, he implies that economic exchange is a secondary activity which results merely from the congregation of people at religious structures. All evidence seems to point in the opposite direction - that religion functions to guarantee the security and peace of the market in order for economic transactions to be carried out in a spirit of goodwill and relative harmony. The literature in anthropology, geography and Islamic studies provides ample evidence to support this statement. This is abundantly clear with the material from North Africa where most research has been carried out on markets in Muslim countries, especially rural and tribal cyclical markets.

The market site is generally chosen by the various tribal groups concerned because of its spaciousness and, depending on whether animals constitute a goodly portion of the exchange items, good grazing land and water. Ease of access is also important as is the water supply which is often associated, in the form of a spring or well, with a saint's tomb.

Fogg (1940), for example, notes that the spring which provides water for the market is associated with the shrine of a saint which in turn is surrounded by a grove of olive trees which delimit the sanctuary area. Sacrifices are made at the edge of the sanctuary and bestow baraka or spiritual blessings on the person making the sacrifice. It is believed these spiritual "credits" will be useful to the individual in his exchange transactions. Baraka can also be obtained by washing in the holy water of the spring or by being in the presence of holy men at the site of the market. Transactions made in the market in the presence of the saint are considered to be made in goodwill. Ferdinand also discusses some of these same points for tribal markets in Afghanistan.

> This ever-running spring is regarded as a singular thing, and is deemed to be under the protection of a wali (a holy man, who by prayer and an ascetic mode of life has come near to God; in Afghanistan a man of this class is thought to possess supernatural abilities). This wali had prayed that the spring should never dry up, and that there should always be enough water for men and beasts (1962:141).

Although Ferdinand does not discuss the relationship between religion and economic activities he does note that there were two mosques set up in a weekly tribal market of 300-350 tents and further that three mullas had come to the bazaar "to fill a need and to earn a living by so doing." Although he doesn't clearly spell out what that need might be, he does indicate that the different tents took turns feeding these religious men and "when the bazaar ended all gave them money." Ferdinand concedes that "It is possible that they might be of importance if a conflict broke out, but that would depend solely on the personality of the individual mulla" (p. 145).

The rural suq (Arabic term for bazaar, used throughout the

literature not dealing with Iran) is much more than a market in the economic sense; it is also a social and political assembly of great importance in tribal life. The market day is the time for legal transactions and all manner of negotiations. Marriages are contracted here and oaths are usually taken at the shrine in cases of dispute and litigation. The shrine and its holy perimeters provide sanctuary in case of danger and need. The sanctuary of the haram is inviolable and anyone who has committed a crime at the market cannot be touched while he seeks refuge in the haram. This provides an interval for the cooling of tempers and also a chance for legal decisions to be made concerning the fate of the offender. The city of Mecca, itself, was built around a shrine which had long been a center of pilgrimage even before the advent of Islam. A certain area around the shrine and the period of pilgrimage were considered sacred and at this place and time blood feuds were in abeyance. Nomads from far and near were able to safely congregate here and engage in trade (see Watt 1953: Wolf 1951). Rural traders in Morocco and indeed most of North Africa customarily hold their great spring and autumn fairs (mouggar) in the vicinity of a sanctuary so that the presence of the saint might ensure the observance of a sacred truce (Montagne 1930: 251). The market site is considered to be under the sacred powers of the saint and disrupters of the market peace are subject to his vengeance and malediction (tagat).

Mikesell notes that with the increasing social and political security accompanying the rise of centralized government the need for religious sanctions to govern market activities has declined in Morocco (1958:498). It might be noted, that Ferdinand makes the same point by implication with regard to tribal markets in Afghanistan. That is,

although he notes the possible functions of the religious leaders in arbitrating and mediating disputes in the market, he places his major stress with regards to conflict resolution on the increasing power of the central government which "now maintains law and order in even the most remote districts [of] Afghanistan" (op. cit. p. 153).

It would seem we have several points here that can now be summarized. The first point is that the degree of religious influence in the marketplace would seem to correlate with a situation where order and security must be maintained in order for exchange to effectively take place. The religious idiom is certainly not the only mechanism available for this purpose but the evidence from the study of tribal cyclical markets indicates that this idiom is particularly effective in areas where there is a poly-segmented structure in which individual political units lack a central authority. Rappaport makes a similar point in his discussion of the relationship between sanctity and political power. It would seem, he says, "that as far as securing compliance with directives is concerned, sanctity operates as a functional alternative to political power among some of the world's peoples" (1971:72). Barth (1961:77) comments along the same lines:

> Where persons or groups belonging to such different parts of a plural society meet, there must be mechanisms mediating the relationship between them - within the limited situation of their interaction, they must be "comparable" in some appropriate framework. Usually, as is the case where the concept of plural society was first developed (Furnivall 1944), this situation is the marketplace, where people meet as buyers and sellers, producers and consumers and are equally subject to the "terms of trade" regardless of the differences in their backgrounds.

In Barth's view, the "terms of trade" become the symbols whose

meanings are shared by all in the impersonal marketplace. The "terms of trade" become the framework which structures interaction in the market. While this is no doubt true, there must, nevertheless, be some other mechanism available in the marketplace to mediate and resolve conflicts which inevitably arise over the "terms of trade." Religion is one such idiom. In the Muslim areas which are the source of most of these studies, the religious idiom often takes the form of a personalized sufi or mystic interpretation centered about the spiritual power of saints (in North Africa, marabout; in Iran, imamzadeh). From the studies of these tribal markets and also those anthropological studies of Sufi brotherhoods (Evans-Pritchard 1949; Lewis 1955, 1956; Cohen 1969; Gellner 1969) it is clear that perhaps the main function of such a religious figure is arbitration and mediation in areas historically rent by feuds and vendettas. The spiritual power of the saint - whether living or dead - would seem to be sufficient to ensure order and provide security.

A second point to note is that generally the religious idiom governing economic action in the marketplace creates an aura of "goodwill" and "brotherhood" in the market which would seem to act as a lubricant in facilitating the smooth flow and ease of exchange. The ideal norm in areas where Islam governs trade and commerce is cooperation. " . . . the fundamental principle of Muslim commerical ethics [is] that the Muslim merchant must treat his customers like his brother" (see article TIDJARA, Encyclopaedia of Islam, 1913). Religious values must be, for every Muslim, the guiding principle of all his dealings.

A third and final point to note is that under conditions of change there seems to be a quite definite shift from religion acting as the main integrative, conflict reducing mechanism in the market to a situation

where other idioms take precedence. This certainly seems to be the case as Mikesell reports it for Morocco and Ferdinand for Afghanistan. Again, Cohen notes that in a pre-industrial society like Nigeria, "greater emphasis is placed on moral and ritual mechanisms" in the organization and maintenance of credit and other economic relations. He says that "this is because of the relatively little developed means of communication, centralization, and bureaucratization of economic and political functions. At those points in the credit system where economic and political mechanisms are not effective, moral mechanisms are strongly mobilized" (1969:85). Cohen seems to assume that non-moral mechanisms are somehow "better" or more effective and only when these, for some reason, break down will moral (and by implication, religious) mechanisms be utilized. Cohen doesn't address himself to the question of why moral and religious mechanisms become ineffective and are replaced by a different type of rationalization of the economic system. Such a process, nevertheless, seems to be occuring in Iran, as it has happened in Mikesell's case and Ferdinand's example noted above. That is, as the economy of Iran becomes more highly developed and diversified the religious idiom governing commercial transactions and practices is becoming increasingly weakened.[1] Economic rationality, in a Weberian sense, is becoming

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[1]Spiro notes that "the importance of religion would be expected to vary inversely with the importance of other, projective and realistic institutions" (1966:116). He goes on to clarify this in a footnote where he states, "This does not imply . . . that as other institutions assume more of the traditional functions of religion, the latter will disappear. So far, at least, there has been no viable alternative to religion in providing a solution to the problem of 'suffering'" . . . (ibid.: 124, fn. 8).

established as a secular value system and these secular economic values no longer need the "ultimate" justification which Islam has provided and still continues to provide, but with ever-decreasing effectiveness. The development of values such as economic rationality is one indication of the process of secularization in which other structural idioms - economic, political, religious - come to be established on an independent basis. The values governing these spheres are no longer sanctioned directly by religious beliefs, but by autonomous rationalities (see Gouldner 1959 for a similar, but more abstract conceptualization of the idea of functional autonomy).

The Ulama-Tradesmen Alliance

Despite the increasing rationalization of the economy the ulama and the bazaar merchants and tradesmen are still acknowledged to have a very close relationship

> because they have the same way of thinking (akhlaqeshan ba ham tavafoq darad), that is, bazaaris obey the religious leaders (rohaniyun) and whatever they tell them they will do, but office people (edari) do not follow the religious leaders very much.

Another informant noted that,

> The rohaniyun, because they have the kalemat (creeds or formulae of faith), ravayat (or hadith, that is, the traditions concerning the sayings and deeds of the Prophet and the Imams) and the Koran of Muhammad in their hands, have complete influence over Muslim people, especially the Shi'a and people will respect them because they are religious leaders and knowledgeable ('alem) and they will obey what they ask them to do.

There are numerous reasons for this relationship, among which are patterns of intermarriage, the need for ulama support in the resolution and adjudication of conflict in the market; the need for a believer to

choose and follow a particular religious guide (marja'al-taqlid) in religious matters and interpretation of doctrine. Another important reason is that one's religious guide or his representative can allow a portion (the sahm-i-imām) of one's alms to be used to help a fellow tradesman who is in financial difficulties. A bazaar tradesman needs to keep on the good side of the ulama and also needs to maintain at least the outward appearance of proper religious performance in order to benefit from this and similar forms of aid and cooperation. The religious leaders are also very influential and their "connections" are continually sought by individuals. Finally, each Muslim and particularly each Muslim family needs a religious leader to officiate at rituals during the life and developmental cycles.

The pattern of transactions between the ulama and the bazaar tradesman are not one-sided. In return for the mediating role of the religious leader in bazaar affairs and also his mediating role between the spiritual world and the mundane world, the ulama receive material gifts, usually in the form of alms. A portion of these alms is kept by the religious leader for the maintenance of himself and his family while the remainder is redistributed throughout the community for various purposes including the upkeep of theology students and contributions to the marja'al-taqlid of that particular religious leader.

The ulama reinforce this interdependency in their sermons and narrations. At a rozeh gathering commemorating the anniversary of the death of Imam Musa ibn Ja'far (the seventh Imam) the narrator discussed some of the tortures suffered by Imam Musa, he then said:

> This was one kind of torture. The second - I wish he had been just satisfied with the first - you know what he did gentlemen? He sent for one of those

> women - a dancer - who was not attached to any morality and put this woman in jail to take care of agha (i.e., Musa). A DANCING WOMAN NEXT TO A RELIGIOUS PERSON; NEXT TO AN AKHUND: EVEN WORSE NEXT TO A MARJA'AL-TAQLID: AND EVEN MORE NEXT TO MUSA IBN JA'FAR. A PROSTITUTE! [said in a tone of incredulity] This woman opened the door and went in. She saw a man lying down with the right side of his face on the ground, repeatedly saying, [speaker quotes an Arabic sentence which he translates into Persian]:
>
> > God! I beg you to kill me and forgive all the sins I have so far committed, for if I live longer I may commit sin and be punished by stoning.
>
> After a few hours the jailer decided to go and see what the woman was doing. When he opened the door, to his surprise he saw the woman lying on the floor repeating the sentence [speaker quotes same Arabic sentence as before but doesn't translate into Persian]. ANYONE, IF HE SITS WITH A RELIGIOUS PERSON WILL CHANGE. IT IS VERY GOOD TO MIX WITH GOOD AND RELIGIOUS PEOPLE. EVEN IF WE ARE NOT GOOD, THEY WILL CHANGE US. The woman called the jailer to open the door. He said, "Where are you going?" She answered, "I am going to ask Haroun why he has put this man in jail. He is a descendent of Fatima."

One of the points that emerges from this narration is the conception that anyone who associates with a religious person will benefit in some way. This was one of the most common themes in my interviews both with the tradesmen and with the ulama. The basic point here is the belief that because the ulama are the spiritual heirs of the Imams and the Prophet, they therefore possess special powers. They have access to esoteric knowledge which facilitates a full understanding of the doctrines and intent of Islam and therefore ensures salvation. In the words of an ulama informant:

> . . . they [i.e., the ulama] are just and are people who don't commit any sin. The world doesn't fool them. These are the people to whom I have to go after the Imams have left the world in order to ask

> about religious rules and guidelines. They rule over people in the absence of the Mahdi. These people are worshippers of justice and they don't think about material things. Then I go to them and learn from them. We have to follow believers (mo'menin). Even if these people lead an immoral life (fesq) but yet their beliefs (iman) are good, still they are religious (mo'men) [sic]. Visits to them and their friendship is still valuable.[2]
>
> Islam says we should visit good people, the big people [bozorgan]. Why? Because if you put two flowers next to each other it is always good but if you put a thorn next to a flower, gradually the thorn will get the smell of the flower. The reason God tells me to go to a religious leader (alem) is because I can use his knowledge. If I become the companion of someone who doesn't lie, I won't lie either. . . . It is just like a light bulb, some of them are 100 watt, another is 500 watt or 1,000 watts - it depends on how it has been made in the factory. When it is on, those who are in the dark will gather round it and take advantage of its light. People also gather round someone who has God's power (qodrat-i Allah) and try to learn from him. In other words, they try to use his light.

The spiritual power (barakat) which is implicitly assumed to be part of the arsenal of religious leaders is, in reality, the power of success. That is, there is the presumption that the religious leader has received his "powers" in the first place from God which is surely a sign of divine favor and he therefore, possesses special merit, he is in some way different from others. As Gellner has stated, "People, in fact, become

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[2]At first sight this statement seems incongruous but what he appears to mean is that prayer, for example, behind a "believer" is permissible whether that person be of good conduct or not. In this context fesq would appear to mean a person who commits various kinds of sins, such as drinking wine, but who is still counted as a member of the Muslim community. Although this clarifies things somewhat, it remains unclear why one should emulate such people unless it is a tacit recognition that the ulama themselves are fesq but despite their shortcomings people should still follow them and give them economic and moral support. Whatever they have done they are still the spiritual heirs, of the Imams. See Izutsu 1966:158-164 for a further clarification of this idea.

possessors of barakat by being treated as possessors of it" (quoted by Mary Douglas 1966:111). The merest contact with someone who possesses such spiritual powers bestows blessings and is a guarantee of success. Those religious leaders who act in ways that exemplify an ideal religious life are seen to possess greater spiritual power than those who involve themselves in worldly affairs. In this regard, other things being equal, politically active religious leaders have a lower status in society than do the pious, somewhat otherworldly religious leaders.

Leach has made a similar point in commenting on Obeyesekere's paper in the volume Dialectic in Practical Religion (1968:2):

> A monk can only be practically useful to a layman if he is to some degree accessible; the more holy the monk the more desirable his accessibility; but his holiness is often a function of his inaccessibility.

For example, a carpet merchant whom I interviewed had this to say about ayatullah Khonsari, who is considered by many bazaaris to be the leading Shi'a theologian in the world (that is, the ayatullah al-uzma).

> People who want to give khoms or zakat will give it to this man. Everytime he returns from prayer in the mosque there are always 10-12 poor people following him. He gives them money to spend. The reason people believe he is a good man is because although people give him money he has never bought himself a carpet. He has a carpet in his house which isn't even worth 400 tomans [about $50.00]. People have offered him carpets but he never accepts it. He says give this carpet to a poor man so he can sleep comfortably at night or donate it to the mosques so people can pray on it. That is why people believe he is a good man. Everytime we see him he has his head down and goes to the mosque and returns home. He has nothing to do with people [i.e., politics]. He doesn't have a car or money. He is a gentle old man.
>
> But ayatullah Hakim [also a religious leader considered by some as one of the leading Shi'a theologians. He lived in Iraq where he died in

> 1970, whereas Khonsari lives in Tehran] has a car. It is said that it is a Rolls Royce. His sons are studying in the United States. If we give him 500,000 tomans, 300,000 tomans will go for his sons' education, so he cannot be a good man.[3]

Individual tradesmen seek out religious leaders who have a reputation for piety, knowledge and barakat in order to benefit in one way or another from associating with them.[4] Khonsari's influence, for example, is shown by how many people attend the ceremonies at which he officiates and the status and position of those who contribute money to him. His influence is also shown by how many people - and their relative prestige in society - show up at ceremonies sponsored by his followers. Khonsari not only can get support directly, therefore, but his supporters can call upon their supporters and other people who owe them various kinds of favors, for aid, money, cooperation in certain endeavors, etc. Barakat, as here discussed, can be seen as institutionalized admiration. That is, it is self-validating and "empirically tested by success, it attracts adherents and so earns more success" (Douglas 1966: 111).

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[3]Many religious leaders have a reputation for "eating money" (pul khor) which means that they are not adverse to lining their own pockets with money given them for charitable purposes, or "swallowing" money obtained through the administration of religious endowments. Interestingly, Firth has noted that in "Malaysia the expression for taking bribes is makan dooit 'to eat money,' or makan swat 'to eat a mouthful,' as in hand-feeding, or gobbling" (1970). In German also a corrupt judge, one who takes bribes, is termed a "gabben fresser," an "eater of gifts."

[4]For example, the late ayatullah Burujerdi, whom most Iranian Shi'a, including the bazaar tradesmen, considered to be, perhaps, the most eminent religious leader and the one most worthy to emulate, has stated that it is religiously acceptable to take interest on one's money that has been deposited in a bank account since "such interest is a stipulation required by the bank for the safe-keeping of the money" (see Burujerdi 1372/1953:254).

Another characteristic of spiritual power or "success" is that it is conceived to be contagious.[5] It can be transmitted by contact or association. Anything which has been in contact with barakat may get barakat. Thus, food distributed by the ulama or pious members of a senf during 'Ashura has barakat as do the packages of ajil (packages of almonds, raisins, puffed rice, and roasted chick peas) which are given out at weddings and sofreh hazrat-i 'Abbas. Water, which a rozeh khan says a prayer over and blows on at a sofreh ceremony is drunk by each participant for tabarok (barakat).

Benefit is not only obtained by touch, as in the examples above, but also by being in the presence of a religious person. The narrator points out, in the portion of the rozeh presented above, that "Anyone who sits with a religious person will change. It is very good to mix with good and religious people. Even if we are not good they will change us." The same point is gotten across by the rozeh khan in the interview at the end of the rozeh in the second part of this dissertation where he develops the analogy of the diseased person. If one is sick, one should seek out a doctor to cure him, even if he has to travel far or sacrifice his life in the process. Since there is little point in sacrificing your life to

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[5]Spiritual power is not confined to the ulama. Anyone who has had a dream in which they saw one of the Imams or, more importantly, if they have had a vision while awake of a holy personage such as 'Abbas or one of the Imams, is considered to be nazar kardeh, i.e., one who is looked upon as favored by God or the Imams. When such people discuss their dreams or visions with other people they believe he or she (usually the latter) is "close to God." Quite often vows (nazr) will be made in the presence of such "spiritually gifted" people for it is hoped their success will be contagious. In fact, the mere association with such a person is considered beneficial. Note the stories of visions and spiritual help in the section on pilgrimages.

obtain a cure to an illness, the disease here is obviously a spiritual one and the doctors who have the cure for spiritual illnesses are the ulama. My ulama informants constantly referred to themselves as "doctors of the soul" and compared the importance of their work with that of physicians who heal the body.

> . . . all the people cannot go and be specialized and learn the laws and regulations of Islam, as everyone cannot go and become a doctor or an engineer [for] if they do the order of the universe becomes mixed up . . . we cannot understand everything about religion ourselves . . . and so God has to guide people and he cannot do this for everyone so as a result he has chosen a group of people and has ordered them to accept the job of guiding people.

To the ulama, this world is diseased - existence is a disease if one carries this metaphor of spirituality to its extreme. The ulama are the physicians who diagnose its cause and thereby discover its cure. The path which the ulama set and establish is the correct policy which believers must adopt if they are to become healthy. Specifically, what is asked for is the renunciation of material things, a renunciation of worldly pleasures since they only lead one astray. Mary Douglas says that "to insist on the superiority of spiritual over material elements is to insist on the liberties of the individual and to imply a political program for freeing him from social constraints . . . they reject society in its established form" (1969:69).

While the religious leaders encourage pious associations in their sermons presumably for the spiritual benefit of the layman, such associations are the basis of a following which each religious leader assiduously cultivates. By attracting followers they gain supporters who contribute money to them (i.e., the laymen) and which they redistribute to others (both poorer laymen and theology students [tullab]) thereby building

up an even larger following. These supporters can conveniently be described, following Barth (1965:102) as extending over a series of concentric zones.

The nucleus of the religious leader's following is made up of a core of devotees who are attached to him by a firm moral commitment. These are people who are extremely pious and who firmly believe in the values and ideas presented by this mujtahid. Often the personality and charisma of the religious leader exerts a profound influence and he becomes, in effect, the symbol of all that is valued by these individuals.[6]

The next zone comprises his wider following which has both a moral and a transactional element. There are many people within the bazaar who may be religious but whose interest in the religious leaders often has a more pragmatic overtone. They seek mediation of commercial conflicts, marital problems and seek general advice of a religious and non-religious nature. While interviewing religious leaders many people came and interrupted us requesting personal letters of recommendation and character references. Others requested that the religious leader use his influence to obtain for the petitioner a job in the government (the brother of this particular religious leader was a fairly well-placed bureaucrat in the government). I was also present on a number of occasions when the religious leader refused to grant requests for certain

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[6]Informants referred to this quality as nurani or roshani, "a certain luminousness," "a sort of holiness." One informant said, "it is the way they talk, their actions and behavior - one can tell!" Another spoke of a particular mujtahid who is believed to have these qualities:

> Some time ago I saw him and believe me I don't care about these men, but as soon as I greeted him I [felt compelled and] went and kissed his hand - believe me without any pretensions, A friend was with me and knows I am 100% irreligious. I wouldn't do it to any other religious leader, but there is a sort of holiness (nurani) in him.

things. No explanations were given to the petitioner, merely a statement of refusal. One person came in asking for money to go to a physician for medical aid. He was refused the money but the religious leader gave him a letter addressed to a physician friend requesting that the bearer be given free medical treatment.

The situation of reciprocal exchanges is often reversed with the tradesmen. Often, while interviewing certain tradesmen, members of the ulama would come and request a loan. Usually, it was given freely while at other times the tradesman required the religious leader to sign a promissory note (softeh). Sometimes the money was refused. Invariably, these religious leaders were young men just getting started in their profession and without a body of supporters. Pious tradesmen, on the other hand, often go to their marja'al-taqlid or his representative to request that they be allowed to use a portion of their obligatory alms for their own, or others', business use during a period of financial difficulties. This is usually granted.

The religious stature and piety of a particular marja'al-taqlid is intimately associated with his political views. This was clearly brought out in my interviews. While trying to determine rough percentages of followers for certain mujtahids I asked many bazaar tradesmen whom they consider to be their marja'al-taqlid. The answer, almost invariably, was "If you are interested in religion, why do you ask political questions?" The personal following that is built up by the ulama by their piety, learning as well as distribution of money, food and favors is used by them not only in political matters vis-à-vis the state, but also within the religious institution itself. One tradesman who was discussing two of the most influential religious leaders of the bazaar said, "yes, agha-yi Rafi'i

has a wide following. He and ayatullah Khunsari lock horns with each other" [i.e., they are in competition for followers]. While there is competition between the members of the ulama for power, prestige and money from supporters, this situation is disliked by many of the ulama who feel they are prostituting themselves to the general public. Lambton paraphrases one religious leader who is objecting to the dependence of the ulama on contributions from laymen:

> The answer to the problem would be to create a central organization for the proper administration of the funds received so that the religious classes would not be individually directly paid by the people. In this way they would be liberated from the clutches of the common people. The maraji' [those leaders worthy of emulation] would also become free and the mosques would no longer be markets in which the members of the religious classes displayed their wares for sale, and instead of a number of persons simultaneously leading the Friday prayers in different parts of the great mosques orderly and dignified arrangements could be made for their conduct.
>
> As long as there is no central financial organization and the religious classes depend upon the support of individuals, it is inevitable that there should be rivalry among them to attract followers. In such circumstances the religious classes are forced to trim their sails to the desires and will of the masses. . . . As long as the religious institution is subject to the control of the masses it is forced to follow, not to lead, them. (1964:133; italics mine)

Max Weber has made a similar comment where he comments that

> The religious virtuosos saw themselves compelled to adjust their demands to the possibilities of the religiosity of everyday life in order to gain and to maintain ideal and material mass-patronage. The nature of their concessions have naturally been of primary significance for the way in which they have influenced everyday life. In almost all Oriental religions, the virtuosos allowed the masses to remain stuck in magical tradition (Gerth and Mills 1958:288; italics mine).

There are a number of points that could be made in reference to these

views but at the moment I would like to emphasize the air of superiority which the religious leaders have vis-à-vis the "masses" and which is recognized by the latter. A pious bazaar merchant, whose relatives include members of the ulama, told me that "the rohaniyun [ulama] look down on the bazaaris. They will never waste their time for them although they use the bazaaris. Because they are strong they don't care about other people. They only want them to pull a load for them" (faqat mikhahand bari az ash bekeshand - the word bari is used in Persian only in reference to draught animals, especially donkeys, pulling loads).

To sum up, then, tradesmen find their place in the religio-political system through a series of choices which they make in relation to particular religious leaders with differing attributes and powers. Most, if not all, of their choices are temporary and revocable, providing a great deal of fluidity and mobility in the system. Such fluidity encourages competition between religious leaders for a following in the religio-political sphere and brings about changes in the lines of allegiance and in the judgments of what is right and what is wrong as seen in the differing interpretations of doctrine in the respective treatises (risaleh) of these religious leaders.

## The Religious Organization of Space

Despite these differences there is a well-known and well-demonstrated affinity between the religious institution and the bazaar. The socio-cultural milieu of the bazaar and its immediate environs provides most of the financial and moral support for the religious leaders of Tehran and a not inconsequential portion of the support for those religious leaders in other centers of Shi'a learning such as Qom and Meshed in Iran and Najaf

and Karbala in Iraq. Most of the influential and highly respected members of the ulama in Tehran, such as Ayatullah Khonsari, who is widely acknowledged by the bazaar tradesmen to be the spiritual leader of the Shi'a in Iran, use the bazaar and its mosques as their center of operation. The bigger mosques in the various cities of Iran are nearly always situated in the bazaars and are an inseparable part of daily life (Nasr 1969:104). The close relationship of the tradesmen and the ulama is clearly seen in the physical structure of the bazaar.

While the term bazaar is used most often in common speech to refer to a particular quarter of the city, it also has reference to any covered street within that quarter. For the most part each of these bazaars specialized in one particular craft, profession or type of product. One bazaar, for example, is known to the older generation as bāzār-i sahāfi. In the not too distant past this bazaar was largely made up of bookbinders (sahāfi). As the need for bookbinders changed over the years this trade tended to die out (although there are still seven traditional bookbinders located here) and the shops have been taken over by other crafts or occupations. In the center of this bazaar a number of shops were taken over by tinsmiths and the bazaar is known today as the bāzār-i halabisāz. This particular lane also leads from one mosque (masjid-i Shāh) to another (masjid-i Jāmi') and is known further as bāzār-i beyn al haramein. The remainder of the shops on this street make up a motley array of products but two are in overwhelming proportions - clothing and stationery-bookstores. The stationery-bookstores are located at either end of the bazaar and their location in proximity to the mosques is in accord with that described by von Grunebaum for the traditional Muslim city (1961: 141-158).

There are numerous and important mosques and other religious structures in the bazaar such as tekiyeh (a building for the performance of religious dramas), maktab (an elementary, primarily Koranic, school), madresseh (college of religious learning, usually associated with a mosque), imamzadeh (a shrine or tomb where a person considered holy is buried) and saqqakhaneh (a public drinking fountain, usually endowed and considered in folk beliefs to be a sacred place). Figure 1 gives the distribution of these structures in the bazaar.

The Shah mosque (masjid-i Shah) is the largest mosque in the bazaar of Tehran and the most well-known. It can hold some 40,000 people in its courtyard and interior. The imām jum'ā of Tehran (the religious leader designated by the monarch to lead congregational prayer and pronounce the Friday sermon) uses this mosque as his headquarters and the Shah himself is the mutavalli (administrator) of the waqf endowments of this mosque (really an honorary rather than functional position). This mosque was built in the early years of the nineteenth century and has been at the center - both figuratively and literally - of the religious and political life of Tehran. It has been the scene of great reverence and also political maneuverings and assassinations such as that of Prime Minister Razmara in 1950. Like other mosques and holy places it has been a place of refuge and sanctuary (bast) for those seeking asylum from the authorities (Algar 1969:129).

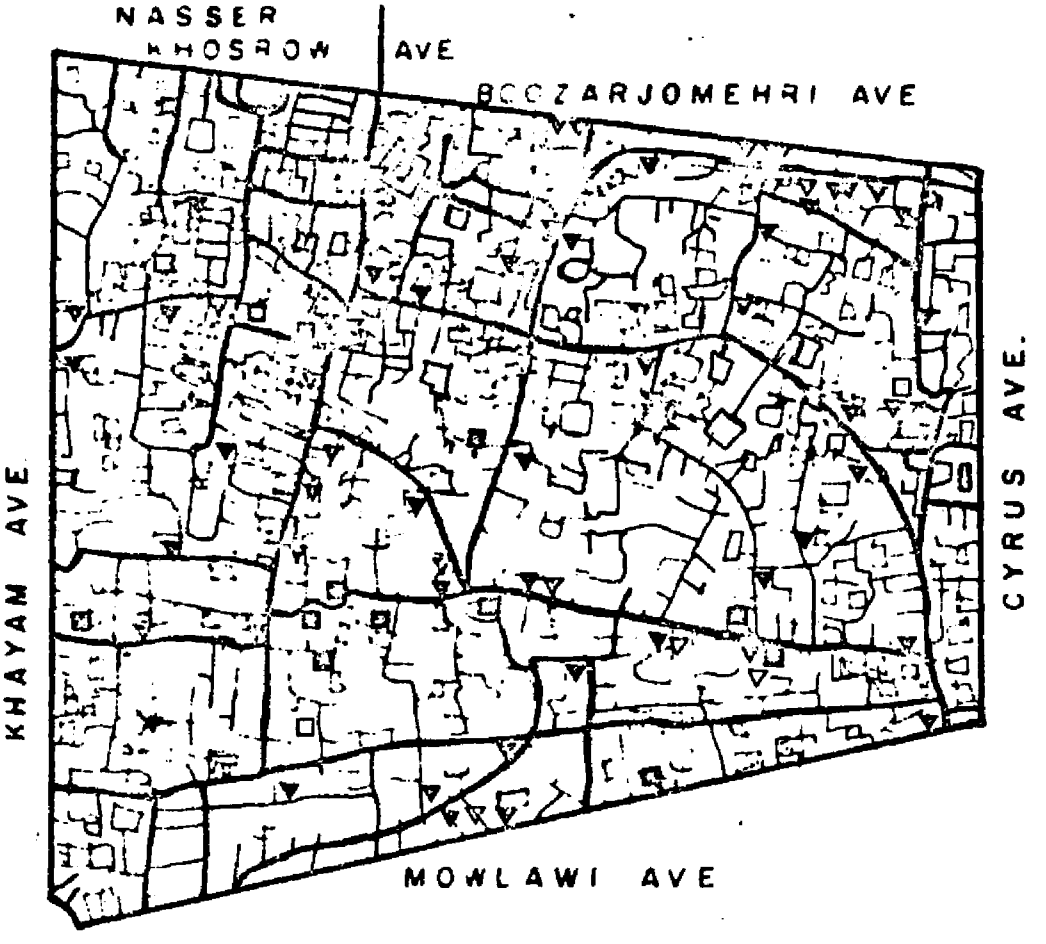
The Shah mosque is centrally located in the bazaar with several entrances facing north, east, south and west. Partly because of its convenient location it is the most frequented mosque for the daily prayer rituals of the bazaar merchants. It also serves many non-religious purposes as well. It is in the huge courtyard where many tradesmen seek

FIG. 1 THE BAZAAR TEHERAN

▼ MOSQUES ▽ SAQQAKHANEH

TEKAYA □ IMAMZADEH

■ MADRESSEHS

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a break from the pressures of trade and rest and discuss religious, political and business affairs. The courtyard and its passageways also function as a shortcut for entry into several of the bazaars and to the main street at the north - Bozarjomehri. It is also from the courtyard of this mosque that the mourning processions begin their movement through the bazaars on the day of Ashura commemorating the martyrdom of Husain. The mosque also, like other mosques, provides public toilet facilities for the tradesmen and their customers in the bazaar. Indeed, the various mosques provide practically the only such public facilities anywhere in the city.

Many mosques in the bazaar tend to be associated in one way or another with particular occupational groups. The Shah mosque, for example, is the favorite gathering place of, among others, the silver and goldsmiths whose bazaar adjoins the mosque. The association I refer to here is very loose in that individuals may attend prayer rituals and other ceremonies anywhere they wish. There is no compulsion to attend a particular mosque. However, there is a tendency for members of particular occupational groups to participate together in rituals which they themselves organize and support at a particular mosque. This is especially true for various types of hay'ats, roseh gatherings and other ceremonies such as the gathering for aid-i Qurban (the feast of Sacrifice). One informant noted that over the years particular occupational groups have built up a "right of priority" (haq-i taqaddom) to use a certain mosque for certain ritual occasions on specific dates. For example, it may have happened that the cloth merchants gathered together and decided to celebrate the Prophet's Birthday (17th of Rabi-ul avval) and were granted permission to use the facilities of a particular mosque such as Masjid-i Mirza Musa. Because of this, each year on that date this particular senf (guild) has the "right

of priority" to use that mosque. It quite often happens that a particular senf tends to commemorate several important religious ceremonies at this particular mosque. It may also be the case, although not necessarily, that this mosque is located in or near the section of the bazaar devoted to that particular senf. Tradesmen of that senf may contribute to the upkeep of the mosque, improve its facilities (such as installing an air-conditioner or modernizing and improving the toilet facilities) or contribute alms to the religious leader of that mosque. In time, then, the mosque becomes known informally in the bazaar as the mosque of the cloth merchants (bazāzhā). As Masjid-i Shah is associated with the silver and goldsmiths and Masjid-i Mirza Husa (also known as Masjid-i Bazāzhā) is associated with the cloth merchants so Masjid-i Hāj Sa'id Azisullāh is associated with the attār ("grocer" dealing in tea, sugar, spices, etc.) and Masjid-i Marvi is associated with the tailors. There is, however, absolutely no obligation on the part of any cloth merchant, etc., to attend a particular mosque. Because of certain political persuasions for example, he may decide to attend a mosque where the speaker is known to have a particular political viewpoint with which he agrees. If he is from Azarbaijan he may decide that he prefers to attend the ceremonies at Masjid-i Sheikh Abdul Husain in the bazaar which is known informally as the Masjid-i Azarbaijāniha (mosque of the people of Azarbaijan). At this mosque during the normal course of activities prayers are said in Arabic and sermons preached in Persian as in any other mosque, but on special occasions - for example, a rozeh held to commemorate the death of one of the Imams - the narration is frequently in Azarbaijani Turkish (Āzari).

The Common Foe

Thus far I have sought to demonstrate some of the reasons for the close affinity between the ulama and the tradesmen of the bazaar. The relationship also has its difficulties, as we have seen, but such differences are put aside in facing a perceived common enemy. Both groups have felt increasingly threatened by the forces of change sweeping through Iranian society and both groups have been especially concerned with the prevention of what they regard as an undue and unjust intervention of governmental power in their affairs. During the Constitutional period in the late 19th and early 20th century the tradesmen saw themselves hurt by Western economic competition and the extortionate demands and threat to the national credit, entailed in the foreign loans to the Shahs to finance their pleasure trips to Europe. Opposition to the British tobacco monopoly, the reasonably successful movement in Isfahan to boycott Western-made goods and hostility to Belgian control over Iranian customs can all be cited as largely government-inspired moves which threatened the economic well-being of the merchant community in the early years of this century. The ulama, for their part, saw growing foreign (equated with Christian) influence as a threat to Islam and their privileged social position.

During recent years, especially since the reign of Reza Shah in the 1930's, there have been extensive changes in Iranian society. There has been a continued strengthening of the central government, including the growth and relative efficiency of the bureaucracy. The merchants and tradesmen especially have been feeling the increasing effectiveness of the tax office. To the merchant the tax office is, not without some

justification, a prime example of governmental corruption. The rest of the governmental bureaucracy is hardly better in terms of excessive red-tape and corruption. The central government has entered new fields particularly agriculture and land reform has brought government agents into contact with rural Iran more than ever before. The government-sponsored literary corps and the development of secular village schools have also meant a new prominence for government representatives in the villages to the relative exclusion of the ulama.

The government's encroachment into spheres formerly the province of the ulama has increased in recent years. The recent growth of secular elementary education, the beginnings of government regulations of Waqf land leased to tenants and the introduction of voting for women despite clerical objections are all signs of the trend to lessening clerical power.

Reza Shah in the 1930's strongly suppressed the religious opposition to his modernizing policies but because of the physical power of the central government, the political activity of the ulama and the tradesmen was restricted to intermittent protest against his autocratic rule and the imposition of, to them, repugnant measures of change. The Shah in turn dealt severely with their protests. One informant told me the following incident to illustrate this process. On the occasion of one of the holiest days of the Muslim calendar the wife of the Shah and several of her women companions went to one of the most venerated mosques and imamzadeh (tomb) without their veils and in western dress. They were refused permission to enter and were vilified in a most embarrassing manner by the religious officials of the mosque. The women then

telephoned Reza Shah and explained what had happened. He immediately came to that place and personally beat and thrashed those religious men in public and personally escorted his wife into the mosque. Later, he confiscated all of the waqf property (endowments) of that mosque, thus making the officials dependent on government support.

Retreatism of the Ulama

One general consequence of this intimidation of the clergy was their retreat from participating in social life and involvement in the changes occurring in the country. Many pious informants, especially young people, told me they have felt let down by these actions of the ulama. They feel that the "retreatism" of the ulama at this time prevented their participation in governmental decision-making, such as that taking place in the Ministry of Education, for example, and hence they had no effect on the educational plans and policies being formulated. Because they did not participate others, who were not religious, took their places in the ministries, thus implementing policies which ignored Islamic principles: the result being that the youth of Iran today are "far from religion." Another consequence of this "retreatist" attitude was that the religious leaders would have little to do with office workers, government employees and others who symbolized the secular world of change and autocratic authority. They cut their contacts with these people who, in turn, cut their contacts with the ulama. The result has been that a large segment of the urban population has had little or no formal religious training other than that possibly received in the home. Minimal contacts were maintained by this new middle class with religious leaders, and only those associated with the most intense crisis rites were activated.

As the son of one bazaar tradesman phrased it:

> The rohaniun [ulama] thought that when western civilization comes to Iran then sexual matters and other bad things would also come with it. But they didn't think that if they would enter society and, for example, take jobs themselves, they could teach the people and promote the good and forbid the bad. They just sat apart and didn't enter society and then western civilization came with its bad things and the people didn't know the right from the wrong and have therefore accepted these things.

## Conclusion

Throughout this chapter I have tried to demonstrate the close affinity between the ulama and bazaar tradesmen. The reciprocity of services between the members of the ulama and the tradesmen as well as their common link through mutual opposition to a government perceived as hostile to their way of life have been some of the factors strengthening the already close historical alliance between these two groups.

# CHAPTER FOUR

# RELIGIOUS BELIEF AND ACTION

## Introduction

The tradesmen of the bazaar seem to be, for the most part, devout Muslims. One cannot help but be forcefully impressed by the outpouring of religious fervor and to note, thereby, the importance attached to religion in its many aspects, as a system of both belief and action.

The following pages indicate some of the ways in which religion is intimately associated with the lives of the tradesmen of the bazaar, both as individuals and as members of groups. Religion orders the rhythm of their lives and provides the structural form of the community in which they live. Participation in ritual performances engages much of their time and energies. These rituals, in turn, reflect and provide many of the organizational principles of bazaar society. Their religious beliefs also have a marked effect on the things they do and do not do. It defines and enforces the moral limits of their behavior. It also influences their relations with fellow bazaaris and also with persons outside the bazaar whose decisions affect their lives.

The values or attitudes held by the bazaar tradesmen regarding their ultimate values, life goals and their position vis-à-vis others in the bazaar and outside are an expression of their world view. Furthermore, the world view of the bazaar tradesmen constitutes an ideology upon which significant social behavior is based. The fusion of ideology and behavior - or at least the attempts to bring the two into line - have

created a dynamic process which gives form to the unique style of life of the bazaaris. Among the most important relationships to be looked at in this chapter is that between religious values and certain types of economic behavior. It will be seen that the bazaar tradesmen interpret religious values and norms so that they support current economic practices and thereby give them legitimation and justification.

In pursuing their material and ideal interests for the sake of maintaining their distinctive "style of life" the bazaar tradesmen and ulama encountered opposition from other, newly-created status groups which were interested also in enhancing the exclusiveness and material privileges of their modernized, westernized style of life. This encounter has led to an entrenchment of both sides, each unwilling to yield to the other, and it gives an added dynamism to social reality in Iran. The following material develops these themes.

At first sight, the following material appears to be about doctrine, but my major concern is with doctrine as it is applied. Abstract metaphysical conceptions are tied to the practical "real" facts of everyday life in such a way that the conceptual oppositions inherent in the Shi'a Muslim world view, binary conceptions such as spiritualism and materialism, traditional and modern, Shi'a (inside) and Sunni (outside) superhuman power and human power, etc., come to be classified as virtuous and sinful, respectively.

I do not wish to enter, in this study, the debate over the place of binary thought in the human mind. As a colleague once noted, "There are few atheists in the realm of the Binary God - for to deny him is to acknowledge him - but there are some interesting heretics" (Rayfield, n.d.).

One such heretic who denounces the Binary God not because he is binary but because he is God, is Edmund Leach. Leach asserts that there is a bio-cultural basis for human beings to think in terms of opposites.

> Binary oppositions are intrinsic to the process of human thought. Any description of the world must discriminate categories in the form 'P is what not-P is not.' An object is alive or not alive and one could not formulate the concept 'alive' except as the converse of its partner 'dead.' So also human beings are male or not male, and persons of the opposite sex are either available as sexual partners or not available. Universally these are the most fundamentally important oppositions in all human experience (1962:3).

Kenneth Burke's ideas on the same subject are less biological and more philosophical. Taking a lead from Bergson's idea of the negative, Burke says that if one tries to conceive of "nothing" it can only be done by conceiving of something. "Insofar as an idea of 'nothing' involves an image, it must be an image of 'something' since there are no other kinds of images" (1961:19). He follows through these ideas by noting that there is an obvious empirical distinction between "positive terms" and "polar terms":

> By 'positive' terms would be meant terms that imply no direct 'logical opposite,' as distinct from 'polar' terms that do imply logical opposites. Thus a word like 'table' is 'positive' in the sense that it implies no contradictory terms such as 'anti-table' or 'non-table.' But 'polar terms' such as 'right,' 'true,' 'order,' 'yes,' imply respectively: 'wrong,' 'false,' 'disorder,' 'no.' The moralistic . . . vocabulary . . . centers in such polar terms (with their strong sense of choice) (op. cit. 23, Burke's italics).

To use words properly then, according to Burke, we must spontaneously have a feeling for the principle of the negative. Thus Burke has applied this principle to a series of terms implicit in the idea of "order" in keeping with the fact that "order" being a polar term implies a corresponding

idea of "disorder," while these terms in turn involve ideas of "obedience" or "disobedience" to the "authority" implicit in "order" (with further ramifications and extensions such as the attitude of "humility" that is associated with the act of obedience or the attitude of "pride" that is associated with disobedience. These in turn lead to conceptions of guidance or temptation, reward or punishment, etc.).

A Transactional World View

The world view of the Koran is strongly commercial and transactional in nature. It is therefore not surprising that the world view transmitted to me by my Muslim informants should exhibit - in its learned concepts, categories, and labels - a philosophy that reflects these Koranic emphases. In a sense it could be said that my informants maintained several sets of cultural forms - an ideal Islamic model based on the Koranic (etc.) world view and a behavioral model based essentially on a conception of human relationships as inherently manipulative, instrumental and transactional in nature. The two sets of cultural forms are fused in the Islamic tradition as experienced in Iran thereby reinforcing each other and providing the powerful symbolic backdrop against which reality can be tested and behavior induced. Geertz's distinction between ethos and world view seems to get at a similar point. He notes, for example, that

> Ethos is made intellectually reasonable by being shown to represent a way of life implied by the actual state of affairs which the world view describes, and the world view is made emotionally acceptable by being presented as an image of an actual state of affairs of which such a way of life is an authentic expression (1968:303).

Such a world view would seem to be reinforced in the minds of believers when it is recognized that they consider the Arabic of the Koran to constitute the actual words of God and therefore unchangeable and endowed with all the "TRUTH" which such a mien presupposes. In addition, the literature in anthropology (particularly the work of Cora Du Bois 1944, and Abram Kardiner 1945) has clearly shown that man tends to anthropomorphize his deities. In Islam, God shares with man most of the ordinary human attributes, sensations and emotions. God is pleased with offerings and thankfulness; He is angry if man tries to cheat Him or withhold from Him that which He considers His due. The ninety-nine names of God are a clear indication of the various attributes He is given and assumes - the merciful, the compassionate, the creator, the thankful, the giver of livelihood and wealth, the abaser, etc. (see al-Madani in Jeffery 1958: 93-98).

In his study of the commercial-theological terminology in the Koran, Torrey (1893) divides his study into five sections, each dealing with particular semantic fields centered about a key concept (the terminology used here is not that of Torrey, but rather that of Izutsu). Torrey's basic point is that the key concepts of the Koran have been transformed, as it were, from a commercial domain to that of an abstract theology.

Although there are many direct references in the Koran to trade and commercial practices it is not these we are concerned with; rather it is the linguistic carry-over to other areas of thought. The key words or concepts which Torrey factors out for discussion are (1) reckoning, weights and measures; (2) payment, wages; (3) loss, fraud; (4) buying and selling, profit; (5) loans, security. Each of these concepts acts in a particular context as a key word which indicates and delimits a relatively independent

and distinctive conceptual sphere, that is, a semantic field. The contextual impact on words and their meanings is, of course, one of the main areas of investigation in anthropological linguistics (see Hymes 1962; Bernstein 1966; Smith 1966; Colby 1966) and it is one of the major contributions of both Torrey and Izutsu that they have been able to discuss the multivocality of the concepts and symbols of the Koranic world view in reference to their particular context. Their analyses were confined to a semantic analysis of written material - the Koran; whereas in the present study, I hope to be able to expand this and to relate the use of particular Islamic symbols to the social structure in which they are presented - the speech events, rituals and ceremonies of the Muslim community of the bazaar.

Reckoning, Weights and Measures

God maintains a standing account with every man. Each good deed is counted in his favor; each bad action is a debt. This reckoning between man and God is generally not interfered with during man's lifetime, but the account must in the end be settled by a full payment of all outstanding indebtedness. Upon his death, each man will be presented with a copy of the book of reckoning - a written statement of his personal account.

> On that day you shall be exposed, not one secret of yours concealed. Then, as for him who is given his book in his right hand, he shall say, 'Here, take and read my book! Certainly I thought that I should encounter my reckoning.' So he shall be in a pleasing life in a lofty garden . . . but as for him who is given his book in his left hand, he shall say, 'Would that I had not been given my book and had not known my reckoning! Would it had been the end!

> My wealth has not availed me, my authority is gone from me.' 'Take him and fetter him, and then roast him in Hell . . .' (Koran 59:13-29)[1]

While man reads his own sentence from the columns of the book, it is up to God alone to reckon the account. Death is ever present and God may therefore demand the settlement of the account at any time. God is ready at any moment to confront both believer and unbeliever with his standing. He keeps each man's account with the greatest exactness in preparation for the Day of Judgment.

Side by side with the idea of a book of accounts or reckoning is the conception of a scale or balance which is to weigh and measure - to provide a judgment according to the values determined. Each man's deeds - his only merchandise - is to be put in the pan of the scale and - as in the book of reckoning - each person will be credited with his exact recompense "even to the weight of a mustard seed."

> And we will set up a just balance on the day of Resurrection, so no soul will be wronged in the least. And if there be the weight of a grain of mustard seed, we will bring it. And Sufficient are We to take account (Koran 21:37).

The weights and measures are the instruments of God and they indicate that His dealings with men are the standards of exact justice and fairness - there is no cheating. He is the supreme bureau of standards.

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[1]Following the lead of anthropologists such as Singer (1966), Tambiah (1970) and Geertz (1960), I feel that the study of literate societies and their ritual and belief systems requires the integration of textual material with anthropological techniques and assumptions. Most anthropologists today in studying religious behavior in complex societies are interested in the works of philologists and orientalists. This orientation is due, no doubt, to the influence of Redfield and his great tradition-little tradition distinction whereby history and textual studies regained full respect among anthropologists.

Payment and Wages

The idea of payment, of fulfilling one's obligations is basic to social life. In tribal society in the Middle East the blood of a kinsman had to be paid for with the blood of someone from the offending kin group; in other cases some form of compensation could substitute for blood such as money or animals. So it is in religious matters. All scores must be settled. All debts must be paid. It is here that we can clearly understand the Islamic view that the human condition is one of general indebtedness. Man owes a debt to society for being fed, raised, cared for, taught and made aware of his moral being and his mortality. Society therefore sets up institutions, roles and attitudes through which the individual can attempt to redeem himself - to pay back his debt. Burridge refers to such a process as the "redemptive process" which means, in effect, living up to the moral imperatives of the community, accepting and internalizing the norms and values of the group. In this life, man can never repay in full all of his debts since existence in a community necessarily entails existence within a network of obligations. Complete unobligedness or redemption or salvation can only occur after death, when the individual must pay his account in full and obtain a particular reward or punishment for his actions.

The redemptive process applies not only to the attempt to repay social obligations to other men and society, but also to the attempted payment of one's obligations to God. That is, the ultimate debt is to God since it was He who gave man existence, the universe and everything in it. He provides not only for this world, but also for the next. Man, in return, must be grateful for God's bountiful gifts, be thankful and follow the "straight path" to salvation and redemption. The process of

trying to fulfill one's obligations to God is also a redemptive process. The individual acts in certain ways which will build up his credit rating by the accumulation of meritorious acts (savab) while at the same time reducing his indebtedness. Life in this world, then, both in relation to society and to God, is a quest for unobligedness, for redemption. Both are interrelated since the fulfilling of an obligation in one area usually fulfills an obligation in the other. Performing a ritual in the religious sphere not only builds up one's credit ratings and reduces one's debts, but also fulfills some of the obligations man has to other men while at the same time, of course, contracting new obligations. It is interesting in this connection to note that although the Koran explicitly states that each man alone is accountable to God for his actions - that no one can be accountable for any reckoning but his own (Koran 6:52). My ulama informants state that savab or meritorious actions can be transferred from one account to another. For example, a mujtahid informant (see page 186 for definition) in speaking of the merits of visiting the tomb of a holy person, said:

> Now I have come to him to make a pilgrimage. 'I am requesting you [that is the deceased] to solve my problem and guide me.' It is written in the ravayat [hadith or traditions] that if a man performs a charitable act, for example, he gives five tomans to a poor person for God's sake and in this way he has made a hungry man full or he has helped a naked person buy himself clothing, he may say that the savab for this action should go to his deceased mother or father. Then he requests from his deceased mother, saying 'I request you to ask God to help me and to guide me so that I can find my way.' Whatever we do is to please God. I make a religious vow (nazr) to sacrifice something, I make a vow to give five tomans to the poor, to give food for the poor, to build a house for the poor and needy. These are all to please God. But all these have a reward and I give this reward to my deceased mother and father. Then I ask God to solve

> my problem. Because I have done a good deed and I have given the reward to my mother's soul, then God finds me worthy and solves my problem.

The tradesmen of the bazaar believe that whatever they give as charity or spend in the way of God, such as building a religiously oriented school, a hospital, or repairing a mosque, will be repaid them in this life: "The people who pay more in charitable works their work and business is even better than the people who cheat." The Koran phrases such a view in the following manner:

> The likeness of those who expend their wealth in the way of God is as the likeness of a grain of corn which sprouts seven ears, in every ear a hundred grains. So God multiplies unto whom He will; God is All-embracing, All-knowing (Koran 2:264).

> Surely those, the men and women who make free will offerings and have lent to God a good loan, it shall be multiplied for them, and theirs shall be a generous wage (Koran 57:17).

Punishments are also believed to be visited in this life upon those who transgress the moral norms of Islam - whether aspects of the great tradition or the little tradition. A friend and I were walking through the bazaar on the anniversary date of the murder of 'Ali, the first Imam (ruz-i qatl-i 'Ali) when we saw a merchant killing a chicken in the gutter. My friend said it is a sin (gonah) to kill anything on this day and that something certainly would happen to this man before the sun set.

For the most part, however, the key words in the Koran centering about payment and recompense are, with few exceptions, applied to a future life.

> And those who believe and do good, we shall certainly give them an abode in high places in the Garden wherein flow rivers, abiding therein. Excellent the reward of the workers (Koran 29:58).

Loss and Fraud

The term "loss" is used in the Koran not only in reference to actual trade (for example, 83:3; 55:8) but more importantly in the theological sense. The loser may either suffer a loss because he has made a foolish bargain, such as that with the devil (4:119) and therefore, the loss is of his own doing; or one may suffer a loss through unfair dealings with the other party to the transaction - God. God for His part makes it abundantly clear, however, that He will not initiate unfair dealings, or engage in fraud. "Clearly God does not wrong man in anything, but man wrongs himself," (10:44). God could be conceived of as a fair and just merchant, paying every soul in full according to its deeds on earth. "Wrong not and you shall not be wronged" - maulana Muhammad 'Ali interprets this to mean that "the debtor shall not be made to pay more than the sum lent," (1951:122). However, God may at His discretion, repay with interest over and above what has been earned. "God blots out usury, but free will offerings He augments with interest. God loves not any guilty ingrate" (2:276). He will pay double for a good deed and He will punish for a bad deed. "Surely God shall not wrong so much as the weight of an ant; and if it be a good deed He will double it, and give from Himself a mighty wage" (4:44).

Buying and Selling; Profit

The transactional relations with God and man include bargaining, buying and selling, as well as interest and other payments. The basic underlying idea seems to be that man should not make a bad bargain by selling the Koran and its message short - "and sell not my signs for a little price" (2:38). "Those who conceal what of the book God has sent down on them, and sell it for a little price - they shall eat naught but

the fire in their bellies . . . those are they that have bought error at the price of guidance, and chastisement at the price of pardon . . ." (2:168-170). It is interesting to note here that man is warned not to make a foolish bargain, by paying too much for too little. The Jews, in a fierce denunciation, are accused of buying this life at the price of the life to come (2:80). On the other hand, those who sell this life for the life to come are praised (2:203).

Perhaps the clearest and most complete statement in the Koran on the commercial and transactional nature of the relations between God and man is the following:

> God has bought from the believers their selves and their possessions against the gift of paradise; they fight in the way of God; they kill and are killed; that is a promise binding upon God in the Torah, and the Gospel, and the Koran; and who is more faithful to His promise than God. So rejoice in the bargain you have made with Him. And that is the mighty achievement (9:112).

Loans, Security

The wealth of this world, is often phrased in terms of a "pure" gift to man - to be used for his benefit. However, it becomes clear that these creations of God for man's benefit are merely on loan. "Your wealth and your children are only on loan; and with God is a mighty wage." . . . "If you lend to God a good loan, He will multiply it for you, and will forgive you . . ." (64:15-17). Indeed, as Malinowski and Mauss have shown, the distinctions between a gift and a "business" transaction are not very clear-cut. What is categorized as a "pure" gift often - in fact usually - carries some of the characteristics of a market transaction in that there is a firm code of obligation to make at least a return of some significant

value. In the Islamic view, this underlying norm of reciprocity applies to man's relations with God as well as to other men.

In order to achieve Paradise or to be sent to Hell, man must pay in advance. That is, his good works and faith in this life - the spiritual credits one builds up - are credited to one's account. A loan is in effect made to God and is paid back many times on the day of Resurrection. In return, God holds each and every soul as security for the debt that it has incurred by its deeds. "Every soul is held in pledge for what it earns" (74:38, see also 52:21).

In summation it can be seen that the relations between man and God in the Iranian Muslim world view are transactional in nature, with the language of the Koran phrased in distinctly commercial terms. While not directly phrased this way by informants, God could be seen as the ideal merchant whose sphere of activity includes the whole of the universe, and who has made a covenant or contractual agreement with man. Everything is counted, everything is weighed, measured and accounted for. He epitomizes honest and fair dealing. To the ordinary Iranian Muslim, life is a business for gain or loss. Individuals attempt to build up credits in the form of savab (religious blessings) and khayrat (charitable works). Whatever one does - be it good or evil - one receives one's payment for it, even in this life. Some debts are forgiven for God is not a hard creditor. In the redemptive process, the Iranian Muslim mortgages his soul and in the course of life makes his payments in advance for Paradise. This is a bargain that prospers for the believer, while the unbeliever sells the Divine truth for the modest sum of ephemeral, temporal pleasures. At the Resurrection, God holds a final accounting with all men. Their actions

are read from the account book, weighed in the balances and each is paid his exact wages - no one is defrauded. Both believer and unbeliever receive their just due.

## Conclusion

The view which the bazaar tradesmen have of Shi'a Islam is strikingly close to Durkheim's conception of religion. That is, Islam is a total, all-embracing system which is not, and cannot be, separated from society. What social rules exist are God's rules and the proper fulfillment of those rules assures one's salvation. Thus, the path to salvation is a redemptive process whereby individuals attempt to repay society for the debt incurred in being nurtured, made morally aware and enabled to exert and realize their potential. Society prescribes the media through which the debt can be repaid and redeemed. In very brief terms, this means doing what God requires. The true form of the family, the state, the economy and behavior in general are discoverable in the Divine Will. As Kenneth Cragg has observed, "The true law in the custody of the true community is the condition of the true society" (1956:142). The demands of God are the demands of society and vice-versa. Society, in effect, as Durkheim would phrase it, deifies itself. Society is, of course, not God, but the structuring of society in the Islamic view of my informants is equated with God's will and in that sense is an attribute of God. Sin is the violation of religio-social ethics and salvation is, in Burridges terms, a release from obligedness. While man is still a member of society this necessarily means he is involved in a moral order, in a network of obligations and cannot, therefore, achieve redemption or salvation until death brings an end to the process of discharging one's obligations.

In life, the tradesman's social actions are judged by his fellows in conformity with God's laws and he achieves thereby positive prestige and social recognition or the opposite. The pious individual may not achieve earthly rewards as a result of his piety but must sometimes be content to receive his rewards in the next life. The redemptive process thus fulfills two functions. In acting out the norms of society, man fulfills his social obligations while at the same time accumulating religious merit for doing so which will stand him in good stead on the day of judgment.

It can be seen that a transactional view of the world is a basic assumption of the Iranian Muslim world view, which provides a symbolic backdrop against which reality can be tested. Islam, as a symbol system, is a construction or model of the "relevant features" of the environment. As such it can, in everyday life, be manipulated under various conditions and in various contexts - taking into account at all times the constraints under which it must operate.

In other words, the foregoing model is used by the tradesmen of the bazaar both as a system of symbols which provides a structure of meaning and as a basis of a commitment to action. It is used to explain, predict and justify actual behavior in society while at the same time inducing a proneness toward manipulatory and instrumental activities centered about the cultivation of dyadic relationships and contractual ties.

Religion and Social Time

In societies of relatively simple technology, religious systems seem to be almost entirely a ritualization of ecology. Religion becomes the idiom through which nature and the natural processes are placated, cajoled, entreated or manipulated in order to secure the best results for man. But even the simplest society acts selectively on the environment, often choosing those aspects of their ecological niche which are significant to members of that society. This is perhaps most clearly shown by Malinowski in his discussion of the relative uses of ritual in lagoon fishing and the greater dangers and uncertainties associated with deep-sea expeditions (1922) and by Rappaport on the ritual regulation of meat production and distribution (1967).

As societies become more complex, there is a less direct relationship to ecological factors and the religious system, in turn, becomes more abstract and genralizing in its symbol system. As Eric Wolf has phrased it, "Where peasant religion concerns itself with the regenerative cycle of cultivation and the protection of the crop against the random attacks of nature, the higher order interpretation speaks of regenerative cycles in general, of the recurrence of life and death" (1966:101). Wolf's distinction is somewhat similar to Leach's "practical religion" and "philosophical religion" and of course, Redfield's characterization of the great and little traditions, although I do not wish to press these conceptions too far here, since they involve greater subtleties than I wish to discuss at the moment.

The Islamic conception of social time, perhaps because it was, from its inception, a religion of the town, is fairly liberated from ecological ties. In contrast to most other lunar calendars, for example, the Islamic

calendar does not attempt to maintain a correspondence between the annual climatic and biological cycles which are related to the solar year of 365¼ days. Because the Muslim lunar calendar is only 354 days, it means that thirty-three Muslim years equal approximately thirty-two of the solar years. As a result, each Muslim month moves through the seasons in about thirty-three years. Therefore, a Muslim month like Ramazan - the month of fasting - moves from one season to the next through seasons of heat and cold, rain and drought without regard for these conditions. Among the Shi'a tradesmen of the bazaar this discrepancy between the solar and lunar calendars means that the month of mourning for the martyrdom of Husain-Muharram will periodically coincide with the busiest commercial season of the year - Now Ruz - as it did during my fieldwork period. When it does, it has a severe retarding effect on commercial activity.

The Iranian solar calendar is the method of calculating time for secular affairs in Iran and has been in use since pre-Islamic times. It was not displaced by the Muslim lunar calendar (hejri or qamari) which functions in society as a ritual or liturgical system of time reckoning. It is useful to note here, although I don't wish to press the point too far, that the bazaar tradesmen have a tendency to use the term mah ("month" from the Persian word for moon) rather than borj, which is the term for month in the solar calendar. Since the religious idiom is so primary in the lives of the bazaar merchants, this is perhaps to be expected. The tradesmen are much more likely to use the Muslim lunar calendar in reckoning time and in daily conversation since ritual events mark off for them the principal divisions of the year. The bazaar is closed roughly thirty-eight days a year, exclusive of Fridays, for mainly religious rituals, whereas national, secular holidays cycle the year for the edari who use

the term borj more often in conversation. Such a linguistic difference in speech behavior would seem to further support the view that the bazaar tradesmen and the edari have different views of the world and of their place in it. Through the use of the Muslim calendar, the bazaar tradesmen participate in a system of time reckoning that proceeds through eternity. The individual's attention is focused on the eternal order as represented by the regularity of the religious months. Within the lunar monthly period, each hour of the day is conceptualized as belonging to a particular Imam to whom prayers should be addressed; while the day itself is regulated by the pattern of the obligatory prayer rituals. Within each month also are other rituals of intensification whose aim is to constantly remind believers of the ephemerality of this world and its treasures. Symbolic reminders exhort the believers to apply religiously sanctioned values to the problems of everyday life. The pious bazaar tradesman is therefore assaulted hourly, daily, weekly and monthly with reminders of his place in the universe and the ultimate goal of his activities. This is not the case for the edari.

## The Daily Cycle

The merchants and tradesmen regulate much of their lives according to the periodicity of religious activities. The major divisions of the day are established by the obligatory prayer rituals. Five prayer rituals, known in Persian as namāz, are required each day (a sixth prayer ritual to be said after midnight and before dawn is highly commendable or mostahab, but not compulsory). The following are the names and times of day of the prayer rituals. Each ritual is divided into units called rak'at (prostrations).

1. namāz-i sobh: This is the morning prayer consisting of two rak'at. The period during which this prayer may be performed is from daylight to sunrise.
2. namāz-i zohr: Noon prayer consisting of four rak'at.
3. namāz-i 'asr: Late afternoon prayer consisting of four rak'at.
4. namāz-i maghreb: Evening prayer consisting of three rak'at.
5. namāz-i 'eshra': Night prayer consisting of four rak'at.

While these five prayer rituals are generally performed at different periods of the day by the majority of Sunni Muslims, the Shi'a of Iran combine several of them and perform them at one prayer session. Thus, the namāz-i zohr and the namāz-i 'asr are usually combined and said together for a total of eight rak'at sometime between noon and the late afternoon. It is considered more praiseworthy to perform these as close to noon as possible, however. The namāz-i maghreb and namāz-i 'eshra' are also offered together anytime after sunset until midnight. Again, the closer to the former period the better. In Tehran the 'āzan or "call to prayer" is broadcast over the radio and when it begins, shopkeepers in the bazaar generally turn up the volume so that others may hear and be informed of their duty. Presumably this action is in conformity with the basic premise of Islam - to enjoin the good and prohibit the bad. It also tends to attract attention and may be one device among many, for some individuals to call attention to their piety.

Individual preferences vary with regard to the time and place of the performance of prayers. Some people, even for the very early morning prayer, attend the mosque and perform their ablutions and recite the prayer in this setting. Others may select a quiet, out-of-the-way place in the home for the morning and night prayers, while the noon and possibly evening prayers will be said either in their shop in the bazaar or at a mosque. The noon

prayer ritual is the one which is most associated with communal worship since the majority of bazaar tradesmen choose this time to get together with friends and acquaintances in the mosques of the bazaar. The rituals are performed while the friends stand beside one another. The rak'ats are performed in unison following the lead of a pishnamaz (prayer leader). It is during these informal get-togethers at noon time that much information passes in the bazaar - information on prices elsewhere in the bazaar, the financial situation of other merchants, suggestions for buying certain goods at a low price with the expectation that the price will shortly rise and other pertinent economic information is exchanged at this time.

As far as the edari are concerned, particularly those of the modern educated group, many of whom have been educated in the west, they do not go to mosques except on rare occasions. They may participate in special services honoring the birthday of the Prophet or participate in funeral rites, all of which are usually connected with mosques, but they rarely attend their local mosques for daily prayers. While it is often said that the working hours and social conditions in an office, particularly a government office, preclude the possibility of saying one's daily prayers, this seems to be more a rationalization than fact. For one thing, government offices usually operate from 7:00 or 8:00 a.m. to 1:00 or 2:00 p.m., depending on the season of the year. This provides ample free time to say one's prayers. In addition, the prayer rituals are more flexible than they might seem, since one can say one's prayers at any time between one prayer period and the next.

This latitude of time allowed in the performance of prayers makes it difficult for individuals to keep track of the piety exhibited by others in the community.

> . . . the beliefs of people are not often questioned; they are simply inferred from people's actions. The test of religious conformity is practice. Provided that a man makes the offerings, performs the sacrifices, it is assumed that he believes in the gods or ancestors to whom these things are putatively addressed (Firth 1964:241).

Much the same thing has been said, specifically about Islam, by Trimingham who notes that Islam has always emphasized the primacy of ritual observances as the main sign of conformity (1949:208). In Catholic countries, there is presumably great social pressure for attendance at the daily or Sunday mass. If one is lax, other members of the community and particularly the parish priest, will know of it and the individual will then be subject to gossip and possibly other social pressures as well (see Boissevain 1965:55). Perhaps because piety is inferred from people's actions it is not uncommon to find bazaar tradesmen going out of their way to be conspicuous in saying their prayers so that others may see them and comment on their religiosity to others.

> I am a bazaari and I am telling you that I like it very much if I am considered a good Muslim. I show it and I give the appearance to be. I say I am Muslim. I say my prayers on time. I fast during the month of Ramazan. I will try to say my prayers, for example, in my shop so you and other people can see me. Or, I perform charitable work in such a way that I can be seen.

Such views are, of course, similar to Weber's well-known comments on the relationship of religion and captialism.

> Admission to the congregation is recognized as an absolute guarantee of the moral qualities of a gentleman, especially of those qualities required in business matters. . . . What was decisive was

> the fact that a fairly reputable sect would only accept for membership one whose "conduct" made him appear to be morally qualified beyond doubt.

This meant, above all, that

> I am a gentleman patented after investigation and probation and guaranteed by my membership. Again, this meant, in business life above all, tested credit worthiness. One could observe that business opportunities were often decisively influenced by such legitimation (1958:305-306, Weber's italics).

Thus, the public performance of the prayer ritual, among other activities, is one strategy adopted by tradesmen to increase their image of piety in the eyes of other members of the bazaar community for the express purpose of gaining a reputation for "tested credit worthiness." In other words, perhaps more crassly phrased, it pays to appear to be religious.

## The Weekly Cycle

The shops of the bazaar are open six days a week - Saturday through Thursday, with Friday generally being observed in Muslim countries, and hence Iran, as a day of rest. In general, in Muslim countries the Friday noon prayers are very important. However, the Friday prayers are less emphasized in Iran than in other Muslim areas where Sunni Islam predominates. This is because in the absence of the Mahdi, the Friday prayers do not carry any political significance and they are therefore not emphasized by the ulama. Von Grunebaum notes that in Sunni areas the preacher at the Friday service calls down "the Lord's blessing on the ruler, the mention of whose name in the hutba, or religious address, constitutes acknowledgment of his sovereignty, while its omission would imply his deposition" (1961:146). Friday is not, strictly speaking, a day of rest in Muslim countries where it is known as "the day of assembly."

> O ye who have believed, when proclamation is made for the Prayer on the day of assembly, endeavor to come to the remembrance of God, and leave off bargaining; that is better for you, if ye have knowledge. Then when the prayer is finished, scatter abroad in the land and seek the bounty of God, but call God frequently to mind, mayhap you will prosper (Koran 62:9-10).

The Koran gives permission, therefore, to transact business on Friday, except during the noon hour of prayer. Some shops on the fringes of the bazaar such as small restaurants, tea shops and "snack bars" remain open; while some other shops remain open only until noon. Shops inside the bazaar, however, remain closed all day, even those of non-Muslims. Friday markets are, however, quite common in the rotating market systems of the tribes of North Africa and elsewhere (see Mikesell 1958; Ferdinand 1962; Fogg 1939). In recent years, however, the idea of a "week-end" extending from Thursday evening to Saturday morning has gained wide acceptance in the Muslim world. Indeed, there is growing dissatisfaction among large scale importers and exporters with Friday as a day of rest, since this interferes with international trade. In Europe, North and South America and much of the rest of the world, Sunday is a non-working day, while in the Muslim world, it is Friday. The merchants, therefore, lose two days a week in business activity and many wish to follow Turkey's example and declare Sunday to be the official day of rest, to coincide with international custom. However, the religious institution in Iran is still too influential to permit this.

Disturbing the flow of economic transactions still further is the sabbath of the Jewish merchants.

> Every Saturday the Jews will close up because it is their holiday. That is why it will affect 40% of the economy of the bazaar. Their work is so important that on their holiday the softeh (promissory note) which the Jews buy or the repayment of debts to the Jews will stop. This will affect the bazaar very much. Usually, bazaaris don't do business on Saturday [that is, they don't engage in economic transactions involving credit, loans, repayment of debts, etc.]. They will say, "Don't you know today is Saturday and the Jews are closed?" Most of the bazaaris need them [ehtiāj be anhā dārand].

We can see then that there are several days of the week during which certain types of economic transactions are precluded. Such work taboos entail serious disruptions in a complex society and economy like that of Iran.

Religion permeates every unit of time recognized by the Shi'a. As the earth has twelve months and four seasons upon which life on earth depends, so too there are twleve Imams, the friendship of whom provides the basis of salvation. As there are four seasons in the twelve months, so there are four pillars among the Imams who form the foundation of man's belief. Indeed, each day of the week, each hour of the day and each hour of the night (twelve hours each, for the twelve Imams) is considered to have its own Imam watching over it. The Mafātih al Janān, a veritable treasure trove of religious psychology, has, among other things, special prayers in honor of specific Imams which are recited at particular hours of the day.

## The Yearly Cycle

As the call to prayer marks the important time periods of the day, so the principal divisions of the year are emphasized by special commemorative gatherings, feasts and processions. The liturgical calendar focuses mainly, of course, on the universal ritual events of the Muslim world;

however, because the Iranian are Shi'a the liturgical calendar in Iran and particularly the bazaar is based in addition on the anniversary dates of the Fourteen-Most-Pure (chahardah ma'sum - Muhammad, Fatima, and the twelve Imams).

My informants, in discussing religious occasions, invariably divided these rituals into two types - feast or festival days ('aid) which are happy or joyous occasions and those occasions which are tragic and call for mourning and lamentations (usually called ruz-i vafāt - "death days" - but also azadāri, sugavāri). Both joyous and tragic rituals are not only major religious occasions, but are eagerly looked forward to as well for their recreational characteristics, particularly by women and children. Many of my informants, especially women, referred to rituals of mourning and lamentation with the term tafrih ("recreation, diversion, fun, amusement"). Upon probing further into this curious anomaly, I found that although religiously conservative tradesmen restrict the freedom of their wives and daughters, they nevertheless recognize that women must get out of the house for recreation at times. Practically the only form of regular diversion acceptable - other than weddings and circumcision ceremonies (which in any event occur only irregularly and sporadically) - is a religious gathering. Elizabeth Fernea notes the same for religious gatherings in southern Iraq.

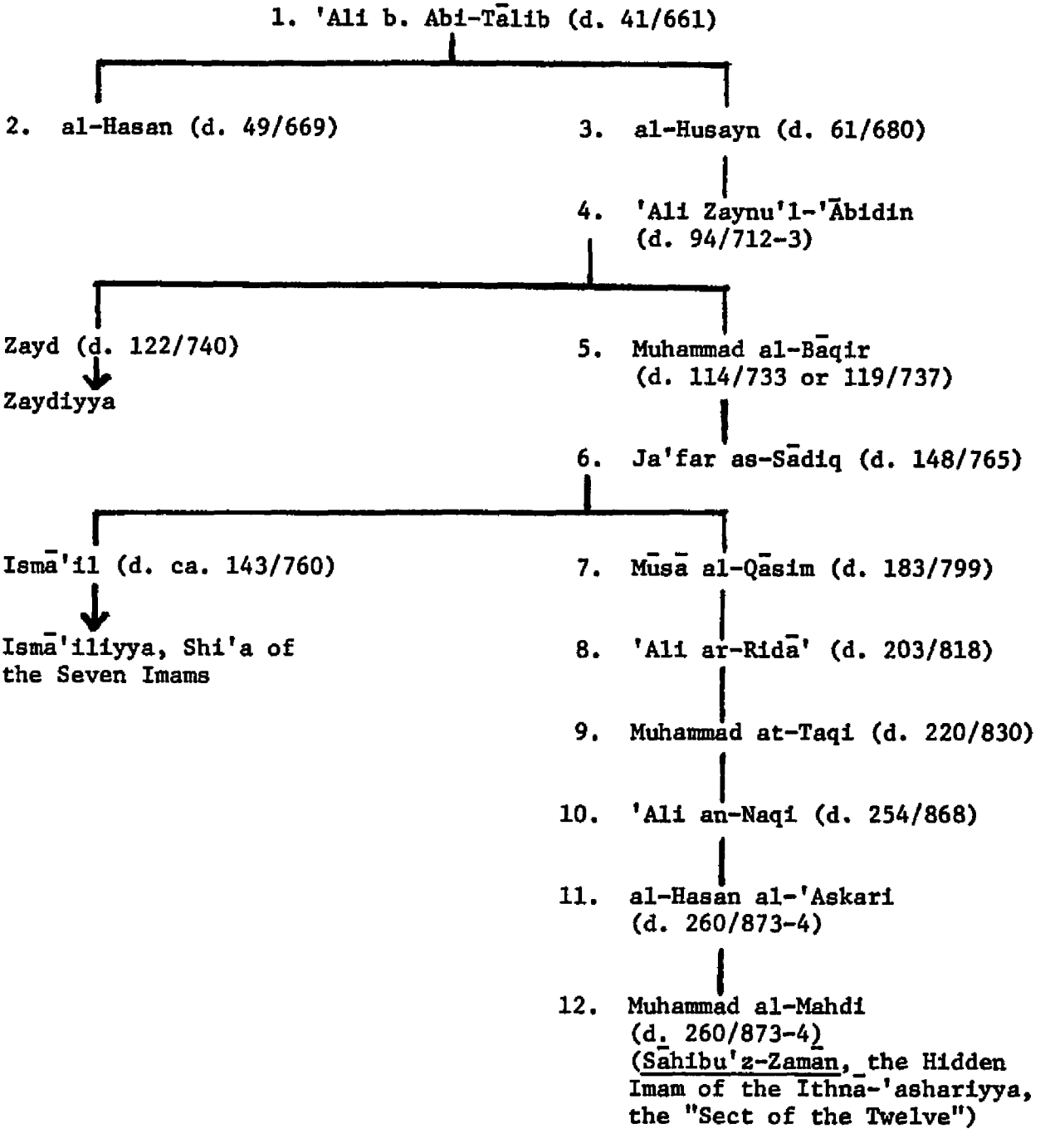
> For the women, the kraya [religious gathering] in the village was one of the few community sanctioned opportunities for meeting socially in each other's homes, in groups that cut across the ordinary kin groupings and which included representatives from all segments of the community, tribal as well as townsfolk (1972:395).

In addition to the social aspects of the gathering, those in attendance at religious gatherings believe they obtain religious merit (savab) from such activities. Attendance at such public rituals is also a noncommittal

activity in that one is not expected to reciprocate. There is no obligation to "repay" the host or hostess for food eaten (if such is provided) nor for the "entertainment" of the evening by reciprocating the ritual performance although those who can afford to give such ceremonies do so but without proffering specific invitations.

Of the feast days in the liturgical calendar, the most important are 'aid-i fitr, marking the end of the month of fasting; 'aid-i qurban, the feast of sacrifice which marks the end of the pilgrimage period; the birthday of the prophet; 'aid-i ghadir, a feast peculiar to the Shi'a commemorating the day when, it is believed, Muhammad named 'Ali his successor; the birthday of 'Ali and finally, the birthday of the twelfth and hidden Imam, 'aid-i hasrat-i hojjat. These were the joyous occasions most often cited by my informants as of greatest significance. However, the birth dates of each of the Fourteen-Most-Pure (chahardah ma'sum) are also commemorated by the bazaaris with some of them taking on significance as great as any of the traditional feasts of Islam. In particular should be noted the birth dates of Husain, Ja'far as-Sadeq (the sixth Imam), and Imam Reza ('Ali ar-Reza, the eighth Imam). On each of these occasions, there are special prayers said at the mosques (marāsem-i namāz) as well as special sermons (khotbeh-yi makhsus) led by various of the ulama.

THE IMAMS OF THE SHI'A



Each new religious year begins on the first of Muharram and ends on the thirtieth of Zihadjeh. Although the first of Muharram is the beginning of a new year, there is no cosmological significance attached to that date and hence there are no religious new year celebrations in the Muslim world (see article MUHARRAM in the Shorter Encyclopedia of Islam 1965). The only new year festivities in Iran are celebrated according to the solar calendar. To the Shi'a, of course, Muharram is the most important month of the year since it is the time for the commemoration of the martyrdom of Husain. The following month of Safar is popularly considered to be a time of bad luck and ill-fortune. The market is correspondingly slow at this time since people restrict their purchases to the bare essentials. The explanation usually given as to why this month is considered to be a time of ill-fortune is that many religious leaders were martyred in this month. The martyrdom of Husain's brother Hasan and the death of the Prophet are mourned in this month - both died on the twenty-eighth. As far as the Shi'a are concerned, however, the more important event of tragic significance is, perhaps, the twentieth of Safar - the fortieth day (Arba'in) after the death of Husain.[2] Tragic narrations (rozeh) marking this martyrdom are held weekly throughout the year, but these gatherings are held even more frequently and with much greater outpourings of emotion during the two-month period of Muharram and Safar.

There is one other month which has religious significance in its entirety and that is Ramazān - the month of fasting. During Ramazān there is a noticeable shift in the pace of time as the rhythm of daily life changes

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[2]According to Muslim tradition and law, the period of mourning at someone's death is forty days. Special services are held for the dead on this day after which the period of mourning officially ends.

to accommodate the fast. The fast is understood by the Shi'a as a way of training individuals to suppress their natural appetites and desires, and "to purify the conduct and character and get the soul charged with divine attributes of God in the practical life [sic] for one complete month" (Ghaffari, n.d., p. 168). Individuals are expected to abstain from food, drink, smoking, and sexual activity between sunrise and sunset.

While many of the more westernized Persians do not fast, the fast - at least its outward forms - is observed by bazaar tradesmen and their families. The bazaar is literally and economically quiet, or relatively so, during Ramazan since most bazaaris sleep during the day, or rest in their shops trying to preserve as much energy as possible during the fast. Other pious Muslims throughout the city also spend much of their time in rest and prayer. As a result there is little commercial activity - people buy only their immediate needs and the merchants relax somewhat. To ensure that religious regulations are observed, the police each year issue instructions through the newspapers governing behavior during Ramazan. For example,

> It is forbidden to eat in public. The Police are instructed to arrest this type of person. From tomorrow [first of Ramazan] cafes, restaurants and chelo-kebabis will all beclosed during lunch time. Only hotels and road houses are allowed to prepare lunch for their travelers. The loudspeakers of the mosques must be regulated so that only people in the mosque can hear it; and record sellers and other places are not permitted to play their music loud, otherwise they will be fined.
>
> It is forbidden to smoke cigarettes on buses and on the street otherwise offenders will be arrested and fined. It is up to the police to enforce the fasting regulations, and it is not permitted for anyone who is fasting to advise anyone else or protest against the actions of those who are not fasting (ettela'at 30th Aban 1347/29th Sha'ban 1338 [November 21, 1968]).

Tension is high during Ramazan, especially toward the end of the month, because of the difficulties of the fast - complicated during certain years when Ramazan falls in the heat of summer. Because of this, the police do not wish to have unnecessary difficulties with those who feel it their religious duty "to enjoin the good and prohibit the bad" to advise others of their religious responsibilities. There is a growing movement away from the idea that "I am my brother's keeper" and increasingly people resent others' advice and interference in their affairs. One day I was on a city bus during Ramazan. A man was chewing gum and another man told him to stop and said it was not right for him to do this while others were fasting. The man answered, "It has nothing to do with you. Mind your own business." Another man then interfered, words were exchanged and one man slapped the other. A fight then took place on the bus with everyone trying to get out of the way and women screaming. Finally, the driver stopped the bus and the two original disputants were put off. As the bus drove away they were still arguing on the street corner. Opinion on the bus, from what I could overhear, seemed divided. Most seemed to agree that the man chewing gum had shown no consideration for others, but they condemned equally - or more so - the man who took it upon himself to correct the other man's behavior. The physical violence was especially strongly condemned.

It is extremely difficult to determine the degree to which individuals sincerely practice the fast. For that matter, it is difficult to evaluate the beliefs of anyone as to his sincerity. Geertz, in discussing a similar problem in Indonesia and Morocco comments that

> such pressures [toward conformity] remain very strong, and though in some cases they lead to mere superficial conformity, in most they lead, so I would judge from my observations, to a significant degree of genuine faith. The notion that demand for religious conformity can produce hypocrites but not believers is simply wrong. It is difficult to say whether more men have achieved faith because it was expected of them than have achieved it because they were internally driven toward it; and perhaps, as both factors are always involved to some degree, the question is pointless (1968:100).

Geertz, therefore, as almost everyone else I have read, avoids the issue of sincerity of belief and the majority of anthropologists would probably follow Firth's view that the test of conformity is practice. If a person practices the rituals it is assumed that he believes. Almost every single one of my many informants made negative comments about the sincerity of the religious beliefs of other merchants and tradesmen. My informants presented themselves to me and to others in the bazaar as sincere believers while they invariably accused others of pretense (tazahor) and hypocrisy (riyā). In fact, it was the frequency of such claims viewed against the observation of ritual performances that led me to question the role of religion in the life of the bazaar merchants. Thus armed with a presumed instrumental view of religious belief and action, much that I observed and heard became more understandable - or at least began to fit into some more or less coherent pattern.

It is a basic assumption of this study that all men face the problem of the insufficiency of ordinary action and search for meaning in their lives and in the problems with which they must cope. At this level, the question of sincerity does not arise. However, as an anthropologist, I am also interested in the social and cultural parameters of behavior. For example, there is a good deal of social pressure toward religious conformity

among bazaar merchants and tradesmen. Such pressures are associated with many factors and the one which I am emphasizing is the economic, as we have seen and will see again later in this work. In some cases, this pressure seems to lead to mere superficial conformity, as noted by my informants. In other cases, there is obviously a significant degree of genuine faith, although one informant felt, expressing what seems to be the majority viewpoint, that perhaps only 30 per cent of the bazaaris were "truly religious." From my observations, I would judge the percentage to be higher but then, perhaps, our standards of judgment differ. In any event, what seems to be operative in the minds of my informants is their belief in the instrumentality of religious behavior and such is seemingly obvious to those making judgments. That is, certain cues are given off by individuals which indicate various degrees of "religiosity" to those familiar with the social and religious codes governing behavior in the bazaar. Individual tradesmen and merchants are ranked by others in terms of the relative degree of religiosity exhibited or perhaps inferred. Aside from any other consequences, such ranking has a close relationship to the amount of interest one would pay in borrowing money in the bazaar and in receiving aid if one were to become bankrupt. The more "truly" religious a person is, the more trustworthy he is presumbed to be; as a lesser risk in terms of default, he is therefore the recipient of a lower interest rate. Individuals who are perceived as less pious are considered less trustworthy, are hence a greater risk, and must pay higher interest rates for their money. There are, of course, other intervening factors such as the ability of the borrower to repay, but a man's reputation for religiosity qua trustworthiness counts high in the evaluation of interest rates. Since <u>behavior</u> or <u>action</u> is the main sign of religious conformity, it seems clear

that a heightened sensitivity would be operative whereby individuals would look for cues from such behavior that would enable them to rank patterns of behavior in terms of religiosity. For example, the specific place one utilizes for the performance of the daily prayers is taken cognizance of. If a merchant performs his prayers in the front of his shop where he can be seen rather than in the rear, where he is barely or not at all visible, this is noted; with the former being criticized as ostentatious behavior and religious pretense. The opposite is, however, also true - a merchant who performs charitable activities in secret becomes known. "Although he [speaking of another merchant] is without pretension and he doesn't make himself known to people, nevertheless, he is very popular." Another informant discussing pious but humble merchants, notes,

> but the people themselves, being clever, spread the rumor [that so and so has been charitable] and in this way such persons become very much respected in the bazaar area and a sort of importance is attached to them and other people respect them.

One example of what is meant by pretense occurred during Ramazan, 1968. I went to the bazaar to interview a Muslim carpet merchant and upon entering his shop, he asked me if I would mind going upstairs to his storage area (anbar) where we could talk without any interruptions. I agreed, and upon entering the storage area was surprised to see several men sitting on the carpets drinking tea and smoking cigarettes. They were introduced to me as friends who were also carpet merchants in the bazaar. As my informant took a cigarette and ordered his shop assistant to make tea, he offered me the same with the comment, "It is alright to smoke up here, since we are away from the people and no one can see us." In his other behavior, as I observed it, he is quite conscientious about attending religious rituals,

saying his prayers and in general acting out the part of a pious believer. He obviously weighs the advantages and disadvantages of a given pattern of behavior and acts accordingly, During the interview I asked him, if he had a choice between attending a religious gathering in the bazaar and attending a lecture on a religious topic at a newly built meeting hall for religious presentations (Husainieh Ershād) in the northern section of the city, which of the two he would choose. He answered,

> It depends on my understanding. If I feel I can understand the useful things they say in Husainieh Ershad I will go there. If I find out that the subject which is going to be discussed is new and interesting for me and I will learn something from it, I will go there [that is, either place that fulfills these requirements].

In other words, he says he makes choices in terms of what he feels will benefit him religiously and intellectually. In relation to his behavior during Ramazan it is obvious that he picks and chooses those aspects of religious behavior he wishes to follow. He does, however, care about what others in the bazaar think of his breaking the fast, since he keeps this fact secret and "hides" in the storage area. He does not smoke or drink tea or in other ways break the fast in public as the man on the bus did, but wishes to maintain the façade of religious conformity. I might add that although his response in the above quote gives the impression that he is "intellectual" in his approach to religion, he is nevertheless very much traditionally oriented. He attends rozehs and participates in the chest-beating rituals (sineh-zani) associated with most rozeh performances held by members of the carpet merchant senf, even though such practices are officially disapproved of by the more learned members of the ulama and the more enlightened (roshanfekr) believers. In the light of his stated objectives about widening his religious education this seems incongruous. It is not however, for he participates in

rituals under "special circumstances"; that is, when he feels it is to his benefit as a carpet merchant because there "may be certain conversations among the people of the senf" (the conversations referred to are informal discussions about social, political or economic matters which occur at such gatherings and not formal presentation of information about the bazaar or the senf).

While the month of Ramazan officially comes to an end with the festive celebration of 'aid-i fitr, there is another occasion which climaxes much of the heightened religious fervor of this month. This occasion marks the anniversary dates of the wounding of "ali on the 19th of Ramazan and his death two days later on the 21st. These commemorative rituals are known as ahyā - "rituals of vigilance" - and are held at night several days prior to the above dates. These rituals are held the night of the 16th to the morning of the 17th;tthe night of the 18th to the morning of the 19th; and the night of the 20th to the morning of the 21st. The Shi'a believe that according to the Koran there are three days in the year which are especially auspicious and propitious for the granting of favors and requests. The people believe these three days are those mentioned in the Koran.

Most of the mosques have ahyā ceremonies which begin about 10:00 p.m. and last throughout the night. A recitation of praise (vasf) of 'Ali and the family of the Prophet is said at the beginning of the ceremony after which a preacher (vā'ez) or a narrator (rozeh-khan) delivers a funeral sermon and recounts the passion story of the Prophet's spiritual heirs, especially 'Ali. Special prayers are said, litanies are chanted and supplications made until the rising of the sun. During this time,

individuals perform a hundred prostrations (rak'at) of the namaz (ritual prayer). At one point in the ceremony the lights are turned out in order for people to concentrate and everyone in attendance rises and places a copy of the Koran on his head. Informants noted that the symbolism involved here indicates an acknowledgment by the believer that the Koran is between God and man. By placing the Koran on his head, the believer accepts that the Koran is metaphysically above man. Being above man and below God it also indicates that the Koran has been sent by God to man and that the word of God is within his reach. While in this position, praises are called upon each of the Fourteen Most-Pure, each praise being repeated ten times for each of the fourteen. In one mosque in the bazaar which I attended and which is known in the bazaar to be anti-government and pro-Khomeini, the preacher, after having praised the twelfth and last Imam, also blessed the ayatullāh al-uzmā (this is the highest stage of religious learning. It signifies one who is considered to be the most learned of the age and whose piety is above question. The spiritual preeminence associated within this role is something similar to that of the Pope in Roman Catholicism but without the temporal power) and wished him success. He also blessed the ulama and hoped they would be able to overcome their difficulties. The interesting aspect of these statements is the implied criticism of the government and its policies. The term ayatullāh al-uzmā is rarely used - meaning, in a sense, one who is the sole spokesman for the hidden Imam. There is no consensus or universal acknowledgment by believers of who, if anyone, is to play this role since there are many learned mujtihids. Those acquainted with the political and doctrinal views of the speaker (as those with whom I spoke at the mosque were) were able to understand the meaning of the indirect reference as alluding to Ayatullah Khomeini. At

the time of this statement, Ayatullah Khomeini was in forced exile in Iraq, where he had been sent for participating in the demonstrations against the government during Muharram of 1963. Open support for Khomeini or his views would be quite risky and it is therefore expedient to phrase support for him (and thereby indirectly attack the government) in such a way as to convey a double meaning. The "real" meaning being obvious, however, to the "initiates." The same is true for the hope that the ulama would be able to overcome their difficulties. Again, the difficulties referred to were understood by my informants as being of a political nature with their resolution occurring with the downfall of the present, and as they saw it, kafar regime. The political significance of any given utterance in a mosque is idiosyncratic and dependent on the personal views of the speakers at any given time. Certain speakers are invited to speak at particular mosques more often than others and, depending on their abilities as learned and pious men or advocates of certain political views, or both, the mosque gets a reputation accordingly. Occasions such as this provide opportunities for the ulama to demonstrate their following since it is on such occasions that individuals choose which mosque ceremonies to attend and thereby declare their "allegiance" to, or "stand behind" (dar posht-i sar-i), a particular religious leader.[3] The number of people a given religious leader

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[3]Some of these are accorded the rank of marja' al-taqlid, that is, a religious leader of the rank of mujtehid whose religious views and interpretations of doctrine are worthy of emulation. Khomeini is considered by many bazaar tradesmen to be a marja' al-taqlid whereas others do not, and feel, for example, that his level of religious learning is not sufficient and that he is a mere demagogue.

attracts is taken careful note of both by those in attendance as well as by members of the Iranian secret police (SAVAK) who may also be (and usually are) present.

One aspect of the ahya ceremonies that comes out very clearly is the fortuitousness of the occasion for the granting of requests. Special prayers of thanksgiving and supplication such as the du'a-yi nodbeh (literally "prayer of mourning or lamentation") from the Mafatih al Janan by Sheikh 'Abbas Qummi are recited at the ahya ceremonies.[4] An example of such a prayer is the following:

> God is free of corruption. His promise is definite. In his promise there is no change. So weep for the purity of the Prophet's family and 'Ali, and weep for the oppressed. Shed tears for these great people, moan and weep, wail and cry out - Where is Husain ibn 'Ali? Where are all the Pure-Ones of the world - each of which, one after the other, were the guides in the way of God and the chosen ones of God?
>
> Praise to God as ruler of the world. Oh God! Take away the difficulties and misfortune. I have grievances to make and I know the resolution lies with you. You are the creator of this world and the next. Answer my request, of answerer of all problems. Help your insignificant slave who is in difficulty.

## Religious Communication

Indeed, as the foregoing indicates, religious performances of any kind are basically acts of communication. Such religious communication, like speech, is structured in such a way that information can be passed, usually to a supernatural being or some other source of uncomprehended power. The assumption underlying all communication phenomena is that the

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[4]It is believed that mourning and weeping are especially efficacious activities in obtaining requests. He who sorrows for the Imams, especially Husain, will rejoice and obtain his reward at the resurrection.

receiver of the message will, in some way, react or respond. It is most commonly expected that, at the very least, the receiver will reciprocate with other pieces of information or that he will alter his behavior, his plans, his judgment or his opinions. While there are other aspects to communication, the point I am trying to stress in the present context is the transactional nature of communication.

For my purposes, religious communication can be broken down into two basic types which are not mutually exclusive. One is verbal communication and the other is non-verbal communication. Muslims assume that between God and man such communication is a bilateral, reciprocal phenomenon. On God's part, He sends a verbal communication in the form of Revelation (kalam-i Allah), to certain chosen individuals or Prophets. It is the latter who extend the message by communicating it to others. There are other, non-verbal messages which are transmitted by God and these are His "signs." These signs are, for the most part, natural phenomena but which require on the part of the human receiver some thought to recognize them as signs or symbols of God's intervention in human affairs and His concern for man. If man recognizes that all aspects of his existential environment are but signs of the Divine concern for man then the messages from God are being decoded properly. All natural phenomena should not be seen as things in themselves but rather as signs pointing to something beyond it - to God or aspects of the Godhead such as His benevolence, His power, His justice, etc.

Such a view is beautifully illustrated by a quote from Emerson's essays on Nature (quoted by Burke 1961:23):

> Sensible objects conform to the premonitions of Reason and reflect the conscience. All things are moral; and in their boundless changes have an unceasing reference to spiritual nature. Therefore is nature glorious with form, color and motion;

> that every globe in the remotest heaven, every chemical change from the rudest crystal up to the laws of life, every change of vegetation from the first principle of growth in the eye of a leaf, to the tropical forest and antediluvian coal-mine, every animal function from the sponge up to Hercules, shall hint or thunder to man the laws of right and wrong, and echo the Ten Commandments. Therefore is Nature ever the ally of Religion: lends all her pomp and riches to the religious sentiment.

These signs and the implicit meanings behind them require man to be thankful and to acknowledge the gifts of God. Thus is set up a structured situation requiring man to communicate to God his thankfulness, gratitude and subservience. Not to engage in the communicative act is to disregard the basic "law" of social relations - to reciprocate in some way for a gift received - and hence to show one's ingratitude for favors received.

Perhaps the major form of communication with God is prayer. However, a major distinction is made by the bazaar tradesmen, as by all Muslims, between the ritual prayers (namāz or salat) and voluntary, personal prayers (du'a) (see Geertz 1960:216 for a comparison with Indonesia). The former type of prayer is much closer to the non-verbal type of communication with God and hence could be seen as ritual behavior. Obviously, the distinction is not a hard and fast one since personal prayer (du'a) is usually accompanied by certain culturally defined postures or ritualized gestures, while ritual is rarely, if ever, carried out in complete silence. The ritual prayer (namāz), for example, consists of prescribed bodily movements and postures, recitation of the confession of faith (shahadah), benedictions for the Prophet, his family and 'Ali as the viceregent of the Prophet and possibly readings from the Koran. But the verbal aspects of the ritual prayers are used in a sterotyped manner; the words are said, first of all, in the ritual language of Arabic which the believer may or may not understand.

The words he utters are not his personal ideas but are symbolic of a particular relationship to God. In another sense, the ritual prayers form the outward, public affirmation that the individual is a member of the Muslim community: for the ritual prayers are considered by the tradesmen of the bazaar to be an exceedingly important, if not the most important, religious duty of a Muslim. It is not so much what one believes but that one give the appearance of belief by properly performing the ritual prayers. Backsliders are almost universally condemned within the bazaar not for their beliefs (or lack of them, about which, in any case, it is difficult to find out) but rather for their failure to perform two of the most important ritual obligations of being a Muslim - the ritual prayers and fasting.

Voluntary, personal prayer (du'a) on the other hand, is a purely personal thing. The fact that it is said in Persian (or Turkish as the case may be) and not in the ritual language of Arabic gives some indication of its spontaneity and sincerity. In the du'a type of prayer the words are not used in a repetitive, ritualistic or stereotyped manner, but rather as the expression of strictly personal thoughts and feelings relative to a particular moment in time. Presumably then a man in this type of voluntary and personal communication with God really "means" what he says, whereas other types of ritual are more "mechanical" and "impersonal" - a possibly dubious assumption, I admit.

The du'a prayer could be considered, in one sense, an example of a "crisis rite" in that the immediate cause which induces a man to use this form of communication is most often a crisis of some sort. In the normal frame of mind of the bazaari in his day to day activities the tradesman

is usually content to perform his ritual prayers, possibly injecting a personal petition to God, but nevertheless content, for the most part, to fulfill his daily obligations. The recourse to du'a prayers usually occurs in extraordinary situations where the tradesman is, for some reason or other, out of his normal frame of mind. A crisis, such as imminent danger of death for himself or a loved one, or some other threat is usually the precipitating factor. In discussing these differences, an informant quoted a verse from the Koran.

> When some misfortune visits a man, he calls upon Us for help, reclining on his side, or sitting or standing. But when we have removed his misfortune he goes his way as if he had never called upon Us for help because of the misfortune that visited him (Sura 10: 12-13).[5]

Du'a prayers are, in almost every instance, petitionary prayers since they ask for something. The bazaari addresses his communication toward God in the expectation that his wish will be granted or that some burden will be lifted from him. Contrary to other types of petitionary prayers which may be arrogant or threatening toward the deity (see the attitude of the Manus toward Sir Ghost in Goode 1951) the personal prayer of the bazaari is humble and is usually associated with adoration and gratitude. This is not to say that bazaaris do not become displeased with God and His actions and express this in various ways. For example, one bazaar tradesman told me that his mother had made a vow (nazr) when he was young

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[5]It might be noted here that this informant was not able to quote the exact wording of the verse, but spoke in general terms about man having suffered some misfortune or other, tends to forget God and his help after the event. The informant did know, however, the chapter in the Koran and using this information, I looked it up in the Koran and wrote the full, correct verse in my fieldnotes.

that if he recovered from a serious illness with which he was afflicted (he was the only remaining son) she would make halva every year on the anniversary of the death of Muhammad (28th of Safar) and distribute it to the poor. This vow was to be kept in effect as long as 'Ali (my informant) was alive. After 'Ali's mother died, his sister kept up the obligation and increased the amoung of halva each year. It began with about one kilo being promised and increased in quantity until today it is about ten kilos. In any case, 'Ali had a son who became mentally ill about his tenth year or so, and 'Ali made a vow for him to get well which he "celebrated" on the same date (i.e., the 28th of Safar). The boy became well, but has had periodic relapses ever since. About two years before the interview, the boy, now a young man, became sick again and 'Ali became very angry with God and said, "Why should I continue with this. My son hasn't gotten better and you don't help him despite what I give in your name to the poor." 'Ali said he told this to his family, including his sister, and they all became very upset and said he was wrong for having said this and should continue on in fulfilling his vow because his son could get worse or even die. 'Ali agreed.

It is interesting to note that there is a common belief among the bazaaris that certain days are especially propitious for having one's prayers answered. Note the following comments:

> We have hadith that those who have a problem, debts, or any other unhappy feelings, if on Thursday night (shab-i jomeh) they approach the sight of God with prayers (du'a), He will never let them down.

While the ritual prayers (namaz) have many functions and characteristics, the highly structured and formalized nature of the ritual seems to indicate that it is, in Malinowski's words, a phatic communication.

That is, it seems directed toward (1) fulfilling the obligation to God of thankfulness and reciprocity; and (2) acknowledging man's subservient relationship to God. The fact that prostration is the very foundation of the namaz worship indicates this subservience. Izutsu (1964:148) comments that for a believer to prostrate himself with his forehead touching the ground [the Shi'a touch their forehead to a clay cake called a mohr made of the clay from the plain of Karbala] before an object to be worshipped indicates "the deepest admiration, heightened to the degree of adoration" and utmost submission. During the normal course of daily events, it is assumed that God is interested in the general welfare of the group and bestows his blessings on men in a rather routine and straightforward manner. The structure of the heaven and earth remains stable, it rains, the wind blows, day and night as well as the seasons alternate as they should. Man's reaction to these patterned events is the establishment of patterned and stereotyped rituals of thanksgiving and gratefulness (namaz). Good fortune, rather than bad, is taken for granted, and as long as believers live according to the word of God as revealed in the Koran, the general attitude of God is expected to be beneficial rather than harmful.

But, in Weber's view, "the problem of suffering" is a major theme in most of the Great Religions and certainly in Shi'a Islam. Since suffering is endemic to social life, it calls for some sort of resolution. At the individual level, the resolution of personal suffering assumes a contractual relationship with God or, more likely, one of the Imams or other saints, for a redress of his grievances. In this sense, the du'a prayer, unlike the patterned and stereotyped namaz, is instrumental in nature in that the words used in the prayer are specifically chosen to produce an effect on the recipient and to elicit a response.

Divination is also a form of religious communication that attempts to get certain information or discover the will and intention of God. By discovering the will of God, the tradesman can foretell the future and depending on the results, such divination may be followed by prayers of thanksgiving, or prayers and promises of sacrifices in an attempt to alter the future. Dreams are seen in the same light - as divine messages which indicate a course of action to be followed or an event to occur which cannot be avoided. People who have seen events in their dreams, especially if they have seen holy personages, are considered to have spiritual powers (barakat) and are very much respected by others. (See von Grunebaum and Caillois 1966 for an extensive discussion of the role of dreams in Muslim society. Especially interesting in our Shi'a context is Corbin's article in the same volume.)

Divination and Astrology

Within the cycles of the day, the week and the year, different moments of time have different qualities, sacred or profane, of ill-fortune or good fortune to which the work and the life of the tradesman is accommodated. Such views are reflected in the practices of divination and astrology.

The tradesman is concerned that his activities - whether they be commercial or otherwise - fall on auspicious days. He is unwilling to undertake any action with some degree of import without first consulting some source which would give him guidance and confidence. With such confidence, he is then able to mobilize his skills, energies and resources unaffected by anxiety, fear or doubts about having made the best choice among the alternatives available. The procedure which allows the tradesman to make a choice is known as estekhareh in Persian, and involves consulting a book - usually the Koran, but often also the poems of Hafez or specially prepared

calendars with notations opposite the dates indicating the auspiciousness of a particular action on that day. These yearly calendars are worked out by members of the lower ranks of the ulama who are interested in the ancient art of astrology - which, of course, has a venerable history in the Muslim world (see S. H. Nasr 1964 for a discussion of Islamic cosmological doctrines, particularly in relation to the Shi'a). One would not think of changing a house, travelling, entering into important economic transactions, getting married, buying a garden or orchard (bagh) or celebrating a ritual without first checking on the auspiciousness of that undertaking. While the individual may consult these works himself, he more often than not goes to a religious leader for consultation. The religious leader first says a prayer and with eyes closed, fingers open the Koran. There are specially printed Korans for such purposes with propitious or unpropitious comments listed at the top of each page. Such activity is theoretically frowned upon in Islam, as is geomancy and the writing of magic charms and the "ulama-yi bozorg" - the better known and more respected religious leaders - would never engage in such practices. Nevertheless astrology and divination have long been syncretized with the more universalistic or transcendental aspects of Islam and the opposition of individual religious leaders at various times in history has been of little consequence. These practices are designed to link personal, pragmatic needs to the vast, impersonal transcendental universe. "Astrologers postulate a grand, immutable cosmic order and also provide means whereby individual decisions may turn out well by being linked into the eternal possession of the firmament at the proper time and in the proper way" (Mandelbaum 1966:1177).

Economic and Status Implications of the Pilgrimages

For those who are not religiously inclined, religious holidays provide an opportunity to get away from Tehran. One newspaper article noted that "the anniversary of the martyrdom of the first Imam of the Shi'a faith, 'Ali, sent an estimated 70,000 Tehranis out of the capital for a long weekend." These people generally travel to the Caspian resort areas or to other nearby places of rest and relaxation. Many other people, however, especially those who are religiously oriented, travel to the holy city of Qom (where on the above-mentioned holiday, an estimated 30,000 visitors from all over Iran spent their time) or to Mashad (where visitors were estimated at over 100,000). These two cities are the major pilgrim centers in Iran and attract thousands of religious pilgrims every year (Darwent 1965:355 notes that for the year 1962-1963 Mashad had at least 300,000 pilgrims and he estimates that "pilgrim expenditures on accommodation alone during the year must be £250,000-£300,000, whilst it is probable that an equal amount is spent in the shops and eating places of the old town center, and on transport"). On the other hand, a Persian newspaper article dealing with Mashad notes that there are more than 500,000 pilgrims to Mashad every year and further that the "400 million rials (5.3 million dollars) that Mashad receives every year from its tourists and pilgrims has been used to build hospitals, schools and other welfare establishments as well as maintaining the tomb. . . ." (Tehran Journal, January 30, 1969). Overall indications are, however, that the number of pilgrims to Mashad is declining by as much as a third (Keyhan International, August 16, 1969). The figures on Mashad plus those of Ronall (1967:34) who indicates that the income from pilgrims to Saudi Arabia in 1962 came to some 44 million dollars, and others (see

Sopher 1967:52ff.) nevertheless indicate that the pilgrim trade is big business and one which is highly encouraged by religious leaders and tradesmen.[6] It might be worthwhile to note an additional point here with regard to pilgrimages:

> Since making [the] pilgrimage requires financial means and the ability to provide for one's family in advance, those who make the hajj . . . are identified with a certain wealth and economic well-being. The hajji is respected by all devout people, but, in the bazaar particularly, to be a haji also confers social and economic advantages. And since all hajis in the bazaar are not always beyond reproach in their dealings, some criticism of them can be sensed among the modernized classes (Nasr 1969:112, my italics).

This view contrasts with Barth's study of the Fur (1967). In Barth's study it was possible for the Fur to convert wealth to rank through the Haj but with no further feedback to the economic system (p. 164). Among the bazaar tradesmen of Tehran, there is such feedback. The term hajji in urban areas in Iran is, in fact, almost synonymous with "bazaari" or tradesman. A term of reproach used among the westernized middle classes of Iran is to refer to the merchants as "hajji bazaari" meaning a

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[6]Goitein provides interesting historical comparisons for the role of the merchant in the commercial and religious life of the Middle East.

> Merchants, craftsmen and scholars alike would combine journeys undertaken in their personal interests with pilgrimages to holy places . . . from its very inception, the pilgrimage to Mecca was connected with the great transcontinental trade and remained so throughout the Middle Ages. The standing wish for a Muslim pilgrim was: "May your hajj be accepted, your sin be forgiven and your merchandise not remain unsold" (1967:55).

Wolf (1951) and Watt (1953) both contain discussions of the commercial aspects of the pilgrim center at Mecca both in the pre-Islamic period as well as during the Islamic era.

hypocritical businessmen, one who hides behind a veil of piety.[7]

To have made the pilgrimage to Mecca generally conveys an aura of distinction although among urbanites in Iran today this aura has somewhat diminished. Nevertheless, the pilgrimage is the fulfillment of one of the main religious duties in Islam and as such it is in a sense the culmination of the believer's religious experience. It is a redemptive process, to use Burridge's phrase, in that the activity can be seen as an attempt to discharge one's obligations to God. It is also a behavior pattern whereby the pilgrim seeks further protection and guidance in life and salvation in the future. The fulfillment of this religious duty has been much admired by other believers and a good deal of prestige has traditionally been

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[7]See also Sadeq Hedayat's Haji Agha (1334/1956) and Afghani's Shohar-i Ahu Khanum (1340/1961) both of which are novels by contemporary Persian writers dealing with the life styles of bazaar tradesmen. Another Persian writer, Jamalzadeh, in writing a review of Afghani's book, notes

> Apart from the novel's literary qualities, its principal interest consists in our opinion in the fact that it describes vividly and with extraordinarily faithful and sharply observation [sic], not devoid of a very personal and original lyricism, the life of an important class of Persian, namely, those who exercise handicrafts, or if you wish, the lower bourgeoisie, or as the Persians themselves say, "Asnafs" or members of professional corporations. They are also called the "Kassab-Kar," i.e., those who gain their living by trade, or the "Able Bazar," i.e., the people of the bazaar. . . . We should note that certain branches of the Asnafs, such as greengrocers, the butchers, the textile merchants and other corporate bodies making a living by small business dealings while not exercising an actual profession or performing regular and constant manual work, are nonetheless considered always as being regular members of the professional corporations of the "Asnafs." . . . The role which the "Asnafs" have always played in Persian life and which to a lesser extent they still play at the present time is one that is of real importance. We do not exaggerate when we affirm that they are the backbone of the country's social life and current economy (1967:174-176).

acquired by the pilgrim. The returned pilgrim had (and has) the right to bear the title hajj as a permanent adjunct to his name, indicating the prestige of their religious action. Those who make lesser pilgrimages (haj-i omreh) to such holy places as Najaf or Karbala in Iraq or Qom or Mashad in Iran are also entitled to bear special titles, such as Karbala'i, Mashadi, etc., as adjuncts to their names. While the older generation usually adopted these titles and displayed them with great pride, they are almost non-existent among the younger generation of pious believers who have also performed such pilgrimages. There seem to be a number of reasons for the disuse of such titles. Firstly, such titles are considered old-fashioned. Many of my younger informants felt there was no need to show off their piety by adopting a special title. They felt their religiosity was their own concern and something that need not be exhibited to anyone. Secondly, it is comparatively easy for most urban Iranians to make the pilgrimage. Iran Air, the national airline of Iran, has special charter flights to the holy cities of Iraq and Saudi Arabia and there are numerous bus companies with regularly scheduled, air-conditioned buses making the trip. Most of the hardships have been taken out of the haj and it is also correspondingly easier to acquire money for such a trip (which has been made relatively inexpensive compared to the past). The time needed to make the pilgrimage is also much less today and the individual need not abandon his family and business for very long in order to perform the religious duty. Just thirty or forty years ago, the pilgrimage was a long, time-consuming and arduous journey, with inadequate health facilities available either on the way or in the holy cities. Accommodations were also quite poor, except for the very wealthy. Today, the pilgrimage is, for those who want to make it, within the realm of possibility. There seems

also to have been a general decline in religiosity among the urban groups and with the relative ease of making such a trip, the prestige of making a pilgrimage has declined in recent years.

The tradesmen of the bazaar with whom I discussed religious ethics and commerce indicated that if one cheats in business or engages in other kinds of activities not acceptable in Islam, then his pilgrimage is not acceptable in the sight of God.

> Wealth should be from an acceptable (hallal) source if one wants to go to Mecca. I was going to go to Mecca several times. I even got my passport but I didn't go because I thought that the money I want to spend is not from a right place (mahalleb sahih). I told myself I cannot take people's money and spend it in Mecca. This is not acceptable. I have to try and earn my own money and then go to Mecca. If God forgives all my sins, then my condition will get better, but if I spend people's money, then my condition will get worse and worse every day. Some people have a high position but suddenly they lose all their wealth, they become very poor. That's because when they are rich and powerful they had pressured poor and lower people. These are all crimes (jorm). You have to find the right path and spend the money in the right way, like people who make and do things which are beneficial to everyone. They build water reservoirs (ab-anbar), public water fountains (saqqa-khaneh), health centers (behdari) and hospitals. These people need to have clean (pak) money, it should be theirs, otherwise whatever they do is not right.

There are a number of interesting points in the above quote. He admits to having "sinned" and engaging in business practices unbecoming to a Muslim. It would seem however, his religious beliefs and degree of piety did not initially prevent him from such acts. In any case, he now has second thoughts when it comes to spending such ill-gotten money on a pilgrimage to Mecca. He came to realize that his pilgrimage would not be acceptable to God and only by hard and honest work would his religious actions pay off - "I have to try and earn my own money and then go to Mecca."

He seems to fear God's further retribution if he spends someone else's money, as evidenced by his fear that his condition will "get worse and worse" if he does so. The informant further elaborates on a very important point, namely that if wealth is spent in the way of God, one's economic condition will improve and the individual will be successful in his business.

> Surely those, the men and women who make free will offerings and have lent to God a good loan, it shall be multiplied for them, and theirs shall be a generous wage (Koran 57:17).

Stories abound in the bazaar to justify charitable acts and the resultant good fortune which follows. One very pious tradesman told me the following story one day about a friend of his in the bazaar.

> There was a man by the name of Ahmad who was a broker (dallal) in the bazaar. He was blind and his friends used to support him and bring him to his work in the bazaar. Despite this handicap he had a few gardens (bagh), two cars and several wives. He was my good friend. One day I asked him, "how is it that when you were able to see you didn't have such a good business and now that you are blind you are doing very well for yourself?" He said, "because you are my friend I will tell you. Once I went to the holy shrine of 'Ali the son of Musa [haram-i aghdas-i 'Ali ibn Musa ar-Reza - that is, the tomb of the eighth Imam 'Ali ibn Musa or popularly known by his epithet Imam Reza who is buried at Mashad] with some of my friends. I saw an Arab there who was moaning and crying and begging. He said that he had 120 tomans of Iranian money in his pocket and 'they have stolen it from me.' We collected the money and gave it to him. He said, 'No, no, I want it from him whom I came to visit' [that is, the Imam whom he came to pay homage to]. We stood in the corner and watched him. Suddenly, we saw him holding his clothes and he started to thank [the Imam]. We went after him and saw that he got the money. I gave him 100 tomans and I got one of those pieces of coin and since then my business is getting better and better.

My informant told this story to me with great reverence and piety, hoping, it seems, to impress me with the generosity and blessedness of the Shi'a Imams. My reaction immediately was, however, to comment that I thought it was improper for the Arab to sell each coin, and then for a ridiculously exorbitant sum [which in any event is forbidden in Islam as usury]. I told my informant that I thought his friend was the innocent victim of a confidence game playing on the gullibility of the pious. It seems this had never occurred to him for he reacted with incredulity. He had taken the story at face value because, it seems, he wanted to believe in the active intervention of the Imams in daily life.

Earlier this same informant had told me another story of a similar nature.

> Some time ago, one of the children of the gardener that we have in our garden in Shah 'Abd-ul Arim [holy shrine near Tehran] went to the army and they sent him to Mashad. Recently, he came back to visit me and said he had seen something. I said, 'what?' He answered that he had seen a blind man at the enclosure of the tomb requesting intercession [the practice is to tie a piece of cloth or something similar to the bars of the enclosure and also to themselves and state that they will not leave until their request has been granted]. The gardener's son was there as a guard to keep order. The petitioner was there for two days and two nights. All the doctors had told him a cure was impossible. 'Suddenly I saw people rushing toward him and taking pieces of of his clothing. I went close and saw his eyes were cured. They weren't red or puffed and there was no sign of disease.' It was God's benevolence to this man through our Imam, because the Imams are the representatives of God.

The point I wish to make by referring to these stories is that there is indeed a deep-seated belief in the powers of the Imams to grant wishes and further that one's belief and pious actions will reap rewards in this life. Note the following from a bazaar tradesman:

> If someone gets money from his own work and then spends it for the health and benefit of other people, God will help him to have more and more every day. He won't know where he is getting the money from. Most of the people who have excessive wealth, God has given it to them. It is not because of their capabilities. It is true that one's activities and his knowledge are very important and effective, but you should know that God's blessing (barakat) is very important. If your goal and your wish are pure (pak) and you don't use your knowledge in a wrong way, then God will give you blessings and will expand your fortune. . . . It is not good if someone gets used to getting and giving interest. Both of them will destroy. Some people who get interest are very rich and they think this money will last for them, but it won't. If God's retribution doesn't come to them, it will come to the children. It will make them beggars. They will have very dangerous and bad days in the future or they will get some kind of sickness which no one can cure. No one can fight with God.

## Ideology and Activity in the Context of the Bazaar

In Islamic civilization trade and the merchant have historically enjoyed great esteem although this prestige has varied somewhat from one historical period to another and from one region to another. Profit in commercial activity is a legitimate goal in Muslim society. This is true, of course, as long as it is recognized that the merchant must respect certain restrictions and prohibitions on his activities as set down by the Prophet and his successors, several of whom, starting with Muhammad himself, had been merchants. Ann Lambton, commenting on the role of the merchant in the Islamic community, notes that ". . . the anti-ascetic attitude of Islam contributed to the growth of the merchant community and helped to raise the status of the merchant. Man's salvation was, broadly speaking, to be insured not by withdrawal from the world, . . . but by integrity and moderation in the conduct of the affairs of this world" (1962:121). Al-Chazzali, one of the greatest theologians and learned men

of Islam, considered the bazaar in particular to be the scene of the Jihad or "holy war" of the merchant wherein he has to wage a war against his own desires and interests in his interaction and transactions with his fellow men (see the article TIDJARA in the Encyclopedia of Islam, 1913).

Sayyid Husain Nasr makes a similar point when he distinguishes between the "little holy war" and the "great holy war":

> Externally it meant fighting wars, either military, political or social ones, the war which the Prophet named the 'little holy war' (al-jihad al-asghar). Inwardly this combativeness meant a continuous war against the carnal soul (nafs) against all that in man tends towards the negation of God and his will, the 'great holy war' (al-jihad al-akhbar) (Nasr 1966:73).

The distinction Nasr makes between an "external" view of holy war and an "internal" view is in keeping with the view which I will discuss later that the Shi'a are continually seeking an esoteric meaning in words and events; they seek "deeper" underlying meanings in thought and action. The obvious is to be distrusted for it is not the real; only the inward, the batin is real.[8]

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[8]This orientation came through very clearly in the statement of an informant. He, a few other tradesmen and myself were discussing honesty and integrity in the bazaar. One person mentioned that some of the religious leaders get money out of their religious activities, i.e., they siphon off money for their personal use from funds given for charitable purposes. One 'alem was mentioned in particular, and my informant noted, "I think he does it secretly, that's why people don't know about it." He assumed a-priori that the 'alem is guilty - that is why he is hiding something. There is inherent here a basic sense of distrust. Curzon, in describing the "national character" of Iranians at the end of the nineteenth century comments that "Persians are a suspicious people . . . and inclined . . . to see a cloven hoof beneath the skirts of every robe" (1891:630).

The stress on the relationship between trade and religion is evidenced in a pamphlet given to me by a bazaar merchant. It is written by a Persian Shi'a and emphasizes the view of the Shi'a Imams on trade and commerce (Barq'i, n.d.). The views of the sixth Imam - Ja'far as Sadeq - are frequently quoted, no doubt because he is considered by the Shi'a as the principal codifier of their traditions. One excerpt, for example, reads:

> The sixth Imam said, 'al tejarat tazid fi al aql' that is, trading increases one's wisdom . . . on one occasion he asked Mo'az, the glove seller, 'are you disinterested in your business? Is your business activity getting less?' Mo'az answered negatively and the sixth Imam said, 'then why aren't you working?' Mo'az replied, 'I am waiting for your revolt (qiyam) and I am preparing myself for the Holy War. Besides, I have a lot of money. I am not under anyone's debt and as long as I am alive I won't be in need of anyone.' The Imam told him, 'don't ever leave your trading activities because if you do your reasoning (aql) will diminish.'

In another section of the pamphlet entitled "In Islam Trading and Work are the Means for Acquiring Honour and Pride" the author, again, in typical Persian literary style, quotes several parables:

> It is written in the hadith that the seventh Imam who, incidentally, was a tradesman (kasabeh) said, 'Go early in the morning to the bazaar in order to acquire your honour (sobh-i zud de bazar ru baraye kasb ezatat). Mo'ali ibn Khunis said, 'I used to go to the bazaar late [but] the sixth Imam said, 'Go after your honour early in the morning.'

The maxims quoted in the pamphlet are often quite similar and all emphasize the themes of hard work, thrift, perseverance and careful attention and reckoning in all matters of trade, being careful at all times not to cheat or deceive anyone.

The religious ethic is very strong in relation to trade and elaborate laws were developed which indicated the boundaries of proper trading behavior. Each well-known mujtahid has published a risaleh or treatise setting out his interpretation of Islamic law and practices which his followers are expected to adhere to if they accept him as their marja'al-taqlid (i.e., leader worthy of emulation). Most of these treatises of the mujtahids devote much attention to commercial matters (see especially Khunsari 1386/1966;and Hakim, n.d.) and are often referred to by the tradesmen of the bazaar in disputes and circumstances that arouse uncertainty as to the religious legality of a given transaction.

For example, tradesmen have told me that it is religiously improper to sell to children. In support of this view, I was referred to various of the religious treatises (risaleh) which note, in the sections dealing with commercial ethics and guidelines, that each party to a commercial transaction must be an adult. As usual in such presentations, however, there are various conditions and qualifications. Note the following:

> If you want to do business with a child who is not an adult [sic], even if his father or grandfather has given him permission, it is prohibited (batel); but if the child is just an intermediary (vasileh), it is acceptable (entry number 2090, Khonsari 1386/1966).
>
> If you buy or sell things to a child you have to give the money or goods to the person who owns the thing; or you have to get permission from the owner [to give money or goods directly to the child, G.Th.]. If you cannot find the owner, you have to give the thing [or value] received from the child as mazalem (entry number 2091, Khonsari ibid.).

It is interesting to note, that although informants noted the religious prohibition on transactions with children, such a statement was usually qualified in some way such as "children may have stolen something

from their parents to sell;" "Merchants don't buy things from a child, such as a carpet, since it may have been stolen." Throughout such discussions it became clear that although the religious prohibition was cited as a reason for not dealing with children, it became obvious that such transactions are not beneficial since if one sells to a child, he may be forced by parents or others to return the goods or money at a later time or to offer restitution (mazalem) for a religious transgression. Such transactions are, in effect, a waste of time and unprofitable.

Collections of hadith, interpetations of Koranic verses applying to business and other unquestionable sources relating to commerce have been collected together in a book known as makaseb which is written in classical Arabic and which is also much referred to either directly by some of the tradesmen or indirectly through the ulama.

In many instances, the shari'ah or Islamic law, is vague and unclear about many practices and much reliance has been had in Islamic countries on the practice of 'urf or customary law. Lambton feels that it was because of the limitations of the shari'ah vis-a-vis some commercial matters that problems were referred to the guilds for resolution (1954:21). In most cases, however, where the laws were clear and unequivocal, as in the prohibition of interest, bazaar tradesmen developed instrumental techniques to accomplish the illegal without breaking the letter of the law.

Trade is surrounded by temptations and desires. There are numerous examples in my notes of cheating, adulteration of goods, profiteering, misrepresentation, deceit, lying, bribery, and numerous other sins in the Islamic perspective which the merchants and tradesmen perpetrate on the general public.

Much "cheating" takes place in tradesmen-customer relations, especially in the bargaining process. Tradesmen almost never bargain for goods among themselves. They say that bargaining takes too much time and that if they did so they would never get any work done. Also, since they know the cost of goods, services and quality within their own profession there is no need to bargain. They trust each other within their profession and if they are cheated, they don't deal with that person again and spread the word in the bazaar that he is dishonest. The average tradesman cannot afford to cheat his fellow tradesman in the same occupation. Different standards apply, however, between the tradesmen of one profession buying or selling to a tradesman in another profession and especially between the tradesmen and the general public.

Tradesmen find it necessary sometimes to bribe government officials. "The reason they bribe is to prevent the government officials from causing them problems." It is interesting to note that this informant added that bribery is forbidden in Islam but this was not his main reason for condemning it. His reason follows:

> Sometimes someone bribes another so he doesn't give him a hard time, but the one who is bribed will get used to it and will cause more problems and get even more money.

Another informant noted that bank employees are often bribed by tradesmen in order to get additional credit. Again, such actions were criticized, not because of the inherent "evil" of bribery, but because additional credit will only cause the merchant to go deeper into debt and finally cause him to become bankrupt.

Some examples of cheating, adulteration of goods, especially food and other devious practices can be seen in some of the following newspaper

clippings and excerpts from interviews.

> The Customs Department Thursday warned consumers that most of the clothes which they were buying under the impression that they were foreign made had in fact been made in Iran and were being sold under foreign labels . . . The Customs Department did not intend to take any vigorous action against the shopkeepers which would create scandal . . . (Tehran Journal 2/8/69).

> Seven shops were ordered closed by the municipality . . . yesterday; the owners were charged with "extensive cheating of their customers" (Kayhan 6/9/68).

> Tehran's health and legal inspectors, waging an intensive campaign against adulterated goods have cooperated in eradicating public enemies responsible for poisoning over ten thousand people annually in Tehran and the subsequent death of some of them (Kayhan 12/14/68).

> Many shopkeepers and foodsellers have been adulterating their products for years without inspection or prevention (personal interview).

> Over fifty bakeries were ordered closed by the Tehran municipality yesterday after their owners were found guilty of shortweighing and over-charging (Kayhan 7/22/68).

> . . . municipality . . . officials met yesterday morning to discuss reports that distribution centers were hoarding kerosene and overcharging . . . with [an artificially created] shortage of kerosene and housewives unwilling to go out [because of heavy snows] delivery men were giving short supply. One, answering a request for 60 liters arrived with 35 liters at the same price and told the customer to take it or go without (Tehran Journal 1/9/69).

In discussing the introduction of hallmarks by the Assays Office of the Ministry of Economy, an official said:

> We have between fifty and eighty callers a day, all ordinary people, who brought in gold articles for assaying. Most of them return home saddened because they find they's been cheated by the goldsmiths (personal interview)

Most informants agreed that cheating in one form or another is not uncommon in the bazaar even though many of the examples cited above more accurately refer to shopkeepers outside of the bazaar. One bazaar tradesman told me, "honest people are few. Sellers and buyers are crooks, but brokers (dalal) are honest." Another tradesman who was present agreed, but added that these middlemen are also "very clever, shrewd and dishonest." A seller of tea, sugar, spices, etc. (attar) said that most bazaaris cheat and take interest on their money. Some of the more elderly informants recalled incidents in the past, during the last years of the Qajar dynasty, when punishments were severe on those who cheated. "A butcher who raised his prices at the time of a meat shortage was hung up by his heels from the roof of the bazaar and beated to death."

A gentle, old man tried to explain the actions of his fellow tradesmen by the following:

> In some countries where people have more security for the future and they know when they retire their children will be secure and cared for, don't need to cheat or deceive. God has created all human beings honest (dorost).

Although the individuals who cheat are themselves to blame for choosing the wrong path, nevertheless this informant lays most blame on the social circumstances that exist which encourage such behavior out of "necessity."

Whatever the reasons or attempted justifications for such behavior it is nevertheless true that the tradesmen of the bazaar are "religious" on the one hand and "sinful" on the other. There is nothing unusual about this, of course. It is a fact that shows, if nothing else, that the bazaaris are human, like everyone else - neither saints nor total scoundrels. As one tradesman put it, "A bazaari doesn't have a horn or a tail - he is one of the people of this country." Of course, the bazaaris do set themselves

apart somewhat from the rest of the urban community by assuming a "holier than thou" position and justifying their own life style through threats of damnation for the unbelievers and backsliders, who do not follow it; while the edaris criticize the hypocrisy of the tradesmen.

In any event, it is clear that the tradesmen of the bazaar are subject to many temptations. One of the greatest dangers, and perhaps greatest of all sins, is to fix one's heart on this world and its pleasures. The ideal view in Islam, as presented by my informants, is that this world is a preparation for the next and a believing Muslim should so conduct himself in this world as to ensure his salvation in the next. This does not mean that a Muslim should withdraw from this world. The contrary view has in fact been stressed. Rather the tradesman must know what is proper behavior in conducting his trade. He must try to fulfill even the minutest detail of the law so as to avoid transgressing the letter and intent of the law and violating the dictates of his conscience.

Adherence to the laws of Islam is the ideal path to salvation. Merchants and tradesmen, perhaps more than others, are likely to feel anxious and guilty about their commercial pragmatism yet such activities are an essential aspect of social life. It is doubtful if it is possible or desirable for men to act as saints in an efficiently operating economy. Certainly, such pragmatic deviations from the ideal norms of Islam have existed since the days of the Prophet. They are not recent innovations. Indeed, it might be said, along with Bennett and Despres, that "instrumental activities constantly require adaptation to the material conditions prevailing at a given time and place . . . [and] . . . groups and individuals come to possess rules or principles of activity which are expressly developed for the purposes of making practical adjustments to a changing reality (1960:258).

Given the fact that instrumental activities will necessarily develop there would seem to be a need for social and cultural mechanisms which would allow for the assuaging of the sense of guilt that would arise from such deviations and allow for the possibility of salvation. This is especially the case for a religion of law, such as Islam. As Weber has pointed out, "The [European] guilds also watched over the personal salvation of the souls of their members by providing them with indulgences and by innumerable testamentary gifts of conscience money and endowments (1964:219). The institutionalization of charity in Islam provides one such culturally constituted release mechanism and the bazaar tradesmen are perhaps more conscientious in charitable activities than almost any segment of Tehran society. The tradesmen and merchants are also more likely to perform the pilgrimage than any other social group in Tehran (of those who can afford it).[9]

## Conclusion

A well-performed pilgrimage is said to purify a person from all his sins so that he becomes as sinless as when he was born. In the dialectic of guilt and purification among the Shi'a tradesmen of the bazaar it is understood that a human being is always liable to commit a sin but he has

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[9]Note the following quotes: "Many wealthy men, especially merchants in bazaars, do, however, continue to pay the religious taxes in addition to those demanded by the government" (Nasr 1969:109). "The haji is respected by all devout people, but, in the bazaar particularly, to be a haji also confers social and economic advantages" (ibid. 112). One of my own informants commented, "Most bazaaris are rich and every year they themselves, their sons and their brothers go to Mecca. Most of the people who go to Mecca are from the bazaar. During religious holidays or 'Ashura a lot of people will go to Mecca and 90% of them are bazaaris"; "It is true some of the senfs show a little interest in Islam, but otherwise Islam is not among us" (page 40 of this study).

to erase it as soon as possible by good action. The daily life of a believer is organized in such a way that he tries to follow the doctrinal and moral injunctions of Shi'a Islam while at the same time seeking out purificatory acts which will remove the hindrances which stand in the way of a believer achieving a sense of harmony and order between his ideology and activity.

The bazaar tradesmen are neither saints nor sinners. They practice their faith because they believe in its doctrines and in the hope of achieving salvation in the afterlife. But religious activity also pays in this life in terms of prestige, trust and hence increased business activity. The pious and successful man has respect in society since he epitomizes one who is the recipient of God's favors and therefore stands in right relation to God. If he sins along the way, his errors can be corrected by good works and his relationship with God is again restablished on the correct course. The moral community of the bazaar clearly specifies how a person must behave if he is to redeem himself in the eyes of other members of the community and in the sight of God.

## CHAPTER FIVE

## CONFRATERNITIES AND RELIGIOUS GATHERINGS

One way in which bazaar tradesmen attempt to redeem their obligations to society and God is by organizing and participating in religious gatherings. These gatherings are held to commemorate particular religious occasions such as the anniversary of the death of an Imam. Individuals gather together also to celebrate feast days, to discuss the Koran and its interpretation or for any other religious purpose.

There are two basic types of organized religious gatherings (hay'at-i mazhabi).[1] One type, known as hay'at-i mahalleh, is not confined to bazaar tradesmen and merchants and is usually organized by pious individuals in their own homes and are open freely to neighbors and friends and other people from the particular quarter of the city who wish to attend. The second type, known as hay'at-i senfi, are religious gatherings confined, for all practical purposes, to tradesmen or artisans associated with particular professions or "guilds."

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[1]The word hay'at has several meanings in Persian. Its most common general meaning signifies a body of men who gather together for a specific purpose. In this context the noun is usually qualified by an adjective which describes the type of hay'at one is discussing. For example, hay'at-i modireh signifies a Board of Directors; hay'at-i ra'iseh signifies an Executive Committee or a Managing Council. A guild-union may have a hay'at-i ra'iseh which oversees the affairs of that organization. In the religious context, the bazaar merchants usually use the word hay'at alone, although it is sometimes qualified as hay'at-i mazhabi. In both usages, however, it denotes a body of men who gather together to discuss religious topics or participate in religious rituals on a regular basis. Sometimes the term jalesāt-i mazhabi is also used.

Hay'at-i Mahalleh

Hay'ats are usually named groups such as hay'at-i javanan-i Islami (the gathering of Islamic youth); anjoman-i mohandessin-i Islami (association of Muslim engineers) or the hay'at-i za'erin-i Karbala (the gathering of the Karbala pilgrims). This latter grouping, for example, is made up of men who have made the pilgrimage to Karbala at one time in their lives. Most of these groupings are informal friendship groups or common interest associations. Thus, aside from getting together to commemorate a particular religious occasion some hay'ats are organized with a specific interest in mind. Those focusing on a specific problem or common interest generally are more private and usually limited to a small circle of acquaintances and friends although no outsider would be barred from participating if he wished to attend. By far the most common of these are those hay'ats focusing on the study of the Koran. These study sessions are ranked according to the level of difficulty of the discussion or program. Thus, there are hay'ats at the first stage called hay'at-i tajveez which focuses on the proper reading of the Koran. A group of people get together and invite a teacher of the Koran (mo'alem-i tajveez) to supervise their efforts. He is given an honorarium (a fixed sum, the money of which is provided by the participants) for his time and knowledge. Someone from among the group reads ten verses (ayeh) from the Koran and the teacher then corrects their mistakes. There is a generally accepted style (albeit with variations) for the chanting or recitation of the Koran. It is recited with a musical tone or cantillation similar to that of the Jewish cantor. So highly prized is this talent that there are annual contests held in all Muslim countries to determine the best Koran reciter. The winners of these national contests go on to an international competition to determine the

world's best Koran reciter. In any event, each individual of the group recites his verses with as clear and correct enunciation of the sounds as he can. There are certain practices which are observed in the reciting of the Koran such as ensuring ritual purity by performing the necessary ablutions and performing the ritual with a proper degree of reverence and posture. Generally, the participants sit with crossed-legs (chahar-zanu) with palms up holding the Koran or else the Koran rests in a special V-shaped book stand. There is often a demonstration of weeping on the part of participants, especially when verses are read that indicate the threats of damnation that await those who do not live up to God's word.

The next higher stage are those hay'ats organized for the purpose of translation. These hay'ats focus on the translation from Arabic to Persian in order to test the reader's understanding of the Arabic of the Koran and to make sure that he understands what he is reading. The next type of gathering is a still higher stage known as hay'at-i tafsir or interpretive gatherings. Those assembled at one of these evening sessions choose a verse at random from the Koran and discuss its manifold meanings. Sometimes they discuss it in relation to other verses in context or in terms of general subject matter and/or possibly in relation to various traditions (akhbar). In these discussions the participants generally try to relate the meaning to various aspects of their lives. Sometimes rather heated debates develop concerning differential interpretations of verses in the Koran. This is particularly true about verses concerning the role of women in society. The religious leader who has been invited to lead the discussion provides information at times as to the usual interpretations of a verse among the ulama or he may quote a hadith (tradition of the prophet or of one of the Imams) regarding a particular interpretation.

In this context also they discuss the reason a particular verse was revealed and under what circumstances so that they may have a fuller understanding of its meaning.

At still another level are hay'ats known as hojattieh (literally "proof, reason, argument"). In these hay'ats participants discuss by reasoned arguments the proof for a given verse. They relate it to common sense, to the natural condition of man including his physical and psychological capacities and propensities and to past conditions and circumstances when the verse was originally revealed - that is, its relevance to a particular social and cultural context. The idea behind this type of activity is that a person should not accept something merely because he was born a Muslim but must accept the truth of a statement by reasoned arguments.

Some participants have a rather literal interpretation of the Koran while others have more liberal views. These different orientations obviously affect the type of arguments they present in discussing various verses. After one particular gathering I got into a discussion with several people and one of them spoke on the problem of differential interpretation.

> In discussing a verse (ayeh) some people quote several hadith and form an opinion [about what it means] and their opinion may differ from others. This may change over time though. By the progression of society and civilization their idea may change and they think about some verses and their opinions change. For example, some may say that shaving is forbidden (haram). But recently some people are saying that having a beard in society may cause you difficulties, so you should shave. But this isn't a really important problem. Or about veiling (hejab). Fifty years ago, for example, some people may have seen that all women must wear a chador and even cover their

> faces and hands. Even in that time, however, there were some people, including religious leaders (rohani) who said no, covering the face and hands isn't necessary. This idea has progressed with the progress of society. They have seen women can't cover their hands and face . . . this must be allowed. Again, these things are not so important. Those which are important cannot be changed. For example, covering the hair or covering the body these are things that cannot be changed. The laws which are clearly stated, such as cutting off the hand of a thief, must be obeyed--they cannot be changed. Those verses that can be changed [are those that] are not very clearly or cleanly stated in the Koran or traditions (ahadith). The opinions about these are changeable.

The hay'ats that are open to people of the neighborhood provide a cross section of the population. Those in attendance are office workers, professional people, soldiers and officers of the army, policemen, tradesmen, merchants and artisans - in fact individuals from any of the occupational groups of the city. One hay'at that I attended had a number of university professors as well as engineers, salaried employees of the government and some merchants from the bazaar. They are informal groupings and meet at an agreed upon time - usually weekly - at private homes. Individuals take turns hosting the gathering and it moves from one home to another throughout the quarter. Hay'ats of this type are usually restricted to recruiting participants from the quarter because of the difficulty in transportation and the time it takes to travel from one part of the city to another.

The frequency of the meetings depends generally on the size of the network. Usually the larger the group the more frequently it meets thus giving members of the network a chance to spread expenses over a wider number of people while at the same time ensuring that the absence of a few people would not destroy the effectiveness of the discussions. In the neighborhood religious gatherings invitations for the hosting of the next

gathering are usually made informally by any particular member. Thus someone will say, quite impromptu, "Next Thursday we will meet at my house." There may then be exchanges of ta'arof (linguistic etiquette and the use of honorifics) by another who may have planned to say something but was beaten to it by another. Something then will be worked out either between the "disputants" or among all members of the hay'at. Frequency of hosting is usually the deciding factor - that is, who has hosted a gathering most recently? There is also the possibility that no decision will be made about the next gathering because of discussions, conversations etc., at the meeting. In that event, someone will usually telephone or speak to a few other people during the week who agree to call the others and get together. The person hosting the gathering gets in touch with a religious leader (usually a va'ez or a Koran khan) of his acquaintance whom he knows to be qualified in the particular area under discussion. The host pays the religious leader an agreed upon sum, usually about 200-500 rials. It is religiously meritorious to help others in the way of God and therefore, ideally, payment should not be sought for such activities. Everyone recognized, however, that the religious leaders ordinarily have no source of income other than these engagements and an honorarium is therefore given. Sometimes a few people present will also give a "tip" to the religious leader.[2]

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[2]At a religious gathering only for women which my wife attended (sofreh hazrat-i 'Abbas) one of the women present gave the religious leader 100 rials, ostensibly for him to read a chapter (sureh) of the Koran in her name for which action she would receive merit. As he took it and put it in his pocket, other women were quietly joking and one remarked "Thank you, that's for my arak tonight" (arak is a strong alcoholic drink common in the Muslim world). The women laughed, clearly indicating their feeling that the behavior of many religious leaders is hypocritical. These same women were, some ten to fifteen minutes earlier, weeping profusely as the same rozeh-khan narrated the martyrdom of Husain.

The hay'at gatherings take about two hours and begin with a group prayer (namaz-i jama'at) usually led by the religious leader although any member of the group may lead the prayers. After that, if it is associated with the study of the Koran the participants begin their studies, recitation and discussion. Tea is also served at various times during the evening. If it is a general gathering not devoted to a particular study session the religious leader discusses morality (akhlaq) or the particularly edifying personality characteristics of a given saint or Imam. Such is the normal state of affairs when the gathering takes place on a feast day or the celebration of the birthdate of one of the Fourteen Most Pure. On the death days (ruz-i vafat) the religious leader is usually a rozeh-khan who narrates an account of the martyrdom of the particular Imam whose death day is being commemorated and, depending on the level of understanding of the participants, they may engage in a chest-beating ritual (sineh-zani) as well. Such flagellations are, however, rare when the group crosscuts occupational and educational levels.

After the religious events are concluded, tea is again served, possibly with sweets of some kind, including fruit. During this time informal conversations take place and gossip and rumors are exchanged. Since each participant in a gathering usually participates in at least one other and most often two or three other gatherings each week, ideas, rumors or plans discussed in one group can be transmitted to a considerably larger number of people in a short time. These neighborhood hay'ats are not political nor are politics ever discussed formally or by innuendo. While some participants may be aware of the multiple meanings often attributed to certain symbols in the rozeh narration this is incidental and the narrator does not emphasize these themes.

The foregoing, needs, perhaps, some qualification. By political content I meant here that which is directed against the Iranian government. I have participated in hay'ats where the religious leader attacked the Baha'is as a religious group and who, he said, practice all sorts of abominations.[3] In particular, however, the Baha'i were accused of being agents of Western imperialism. One religious leader went into an extensive discussion of how the Baha'i were agents of the British. He said the Baha'i movement was an invention of the British to sow dissension among Muslims. He then said,

> I have heard that one of the leaders of a British colony said that we must have a statue of Mo'avieh erected in gold because he was very good for us . . . he caused Islam not to progress as it had earlier.[4]

After elaborating on this theme and quite bitterly attacking the Baha'i, he launched into a general attack on the West.

> We are not happy with Europeans and Americans. They are playing with the world. The French are playing with the world--just think about colonialism in Africa.
>
> There was a foreigner in Iran who had an Iranian servant. He used to give him money everyday to buy

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[3]It was said at one gathering, for example, that a Baha'i can have sexual intercourse with his sister or daughter if he cannot find another woman. He must then pay some sort of indemnity or fine for this action but it is nevertheless sanctioned. The religious leader said this is written in the books of the Baha'i. Such attacks are not new. The Babi-Baha'i movement began in Iran in 1844 and attracted attention and vitriolic attacks because of its claim of fulfillment of Shi'a messianic expectations. It was subjected to ruthless and open persecution. Today, despite the opposition of the ulama and bazaar tradesmen - to name a few oppositional groups - Baha'is occupy high positions in government - a fact which does not endear the present government to the opponents of the Baha'i movement.

[4]Mo'avieh was the Umayyad caliph who disputed with 'Ali over the leadership of the Muslim community. His son Yazid was the person the Shi'a blame for the death of Husain. Both Mo'avieh and Yazid are seen as the "lowest of the low" in Shi'a Islam.

> food for the house. When the servant returned the foreigner would encourage him to overcharge him for what he paid for the food. He wanted the servant to get more money and have a better life. Then one day the servant was asked by the foreigner to become a Christian. The man refused and they didn't keep him in the house any more. Because he could not get as much income as he had before he started to steal and develop bad habits. We have this complaint about Europeans and Americans that they cause people to have bad habits. Not only in Iran but in other countries as well. I have told you about the British and what they have done to us.[5]

Despite the occasional attacks on western imperialism, the majority of neighborhood hay'ats are completely a-political. The events discussed at the conclusion of a gathering - when they are of a non-religious nature - usually center around problems of mutual-aid. They try to solve problems that individuals of the group may have or problems of others in the quarter. Someone may get up and say that so and so has a problem; for example, that he is unemployed and cannot support his family. They discuss the problem, especially their mutual obligations as Muslims to help other members of the community in need, and what can be done to alleviate the situation. Some suggest collecting money or other forms of aid, another suggests using various "connections" in the government bureaucracy to get official help

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[5]It is quite common to hear attacks on the West couched in religious terms. That is, Christians are often accused of actions such as that described above as a way of attacking the Christian West and its attempts to undermine the structure of Islamic society. Nationalistic fervor then is still, to a very large extent, bound up with religion. The encroachment of foreigners is a threat, first and foremost, to Islam and secondly, to the Persians. There seems to be a genuine fear among the ulama that as the young people of Iran are attracted to a Western style of life so they will be attracted to Christianity or Baha'ism. In talking with a young tradesman who was also a Sufi I asked him if he felt that Sufism was attracting new adherents. He replied, "yes, because Sufi sheikhs accept anyone very quickly because they are afraid young people may become Baha'i."

of some kind for the family. Whatever is decided, the participants are active in following it up. Sometimes the discussion centers around complaints about the quarter - poor garbage collection, pot-holes in the streets or the indifference of the municipality to the needs of the quarter.[6] Again, attempts are made to remedy the problems where possible. At one hay'at I recall someone complaining about being cheated by a merchant. He didn't mention the merchant's name since this is considered religiously unworthy (haram was the word used when I questioned others about this) but said that one should be careful not to get cheated when one buys silver articles in the bazaar of the silversmiths. This put the others present on the alert that a silversmith in the bazaar is cheating (possibly by giving inferior quality at the price of good silver - a common enough occurrence) and they should be extra careful when purchasing such articles. According to the views of informants trade is to be conducted according to law and justice and it is considered a religious duty to tell the truth and to prevent people from being cheated. Tradesmen should inform other tradesmen when an item is not selling well so that he doesn't buy it and thereby lose money.

It is through the ideas, rumors, gossip and other aspects of the communication networks established through these hay'ats that norms and values are percolated through society. Information about the religious establishment, the sentiments and attitudes of office workers or bazaar

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[6] It should be noted here that even official groups like the anjomanha-yi mahalleh (quarter associations) have periodic religious hay'ats where such topics are also discussed. Most hay'ats, however, are privately organized, self-help groups, indicating, I believe, a lack of confidence in government activities.

tradesmen are communicated to other participants in the hay'at who have positions of influence where such information might be of use. The opposite is also true. Plans, policies and values of the "elite" may also flow down to the participants in these weekly hay'ats.

Hay'at-i Senfi

While the hay'at-i mahalleh usually crosscuts occupational and status-group lines the hay'at-i senfi is fairly well confined to the members of a particular trade. The meetings[7] are generally not organized by the senf as a formal organization but rather by individuals who share a common occupation or craft in the bazaar and who are, of course, Muslim. The non-Muslim members of the senf do not participate in Islamic rituals and interact only in business matters in the bazaar or through the formal structure of the guild-union (senf-i ettehadieh).

The same reasons for gathering together apply to the hay'at-i senfi as to those of the neighborhood gatherings. The bazaar tradesmen are, however, much more conscientious in observing the birthdates and death dates of the Fourteen Most Pure than are others. As can be seen from the following list there is either a birth date, death date or one of the calendrical feasts of the Muslim calendar each month. Because of the frequency of these religious occasions the bazaar tradesmen have found it convenient to meet each week and most tradesmen participate in several different gatherings each week. On death days, the bazaar tradesmen almost

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[7]While these gatherings were usually referred to as hay'ats or rozehs, other terms were quite often used such as jaleseh or majles ("session, meeting") indicating something more than merely a ceremonial or ritual occasion.

| ISLAMIC MONTH | COMMEMORATIVE RITUAL EVENTS |
|---|---|
| 1. Muharram | Events occur throughout the whole month, but the 1st to the 10th; the 13th; 22nd and 26th are especially important as commemorative dates for the death of Husain. |
| 2. Safar | The whole month is also considered to be a period of mourning and sadness for the pious. The 20th is 'Arba'in, the fortieth day after the death of Husain. On the 28th both Muhammad the Prophet and Hasan, the 2nd Imam, died. The 7th of the month is the birth date of the 7th Imam-Musa al-Qasim. |
| 3. Rabi-ul Aval | 8th-the death date of the 11th Imam-Hasan al-'Askari<br>9th-the death date of Omar the second Caliph. This is considered by the Shi'a to be a joyous occasion<br>17th-birthdates of Muhammad the Prophet and the 6th Imam, Ja'far as-Sadiq. |
| 4. Rabi-ul Sani | 6th-the birthdate of the 11th Imam Hasan al-'Askari |
| 5. Jamadi-ul Aval | 13th-the date of Fatima the Prophet's daughter, wife of 'Ali and mother of Husain<br>14th-a day of mourning<br>15th-birth date of 'Ali Zein-ul Abedin, the 4th Imam |
| 6. Jamadi-ul Sani | none |
| 7. Rajab | 1st-birth date of 5th Imam Muhammad al-Baqir<br>3rd-death date of 10th Imam, 'Ali an-Naqi<br>13th-birthdate of 1st Imam, 'Ali ibn Abi-Talib<br>23rd-7th Imam poisoned<br>25th-death date of 7th Imam Musa al-Qasim<br>27th-'Aid-i Mabath (Prophet's Mission) |
| 8. Sha'ban | 3rd-birth date of Husain, the 3rd Imam<br>8th-disappearance of the 12th Imam-the Mahdi<br>15th-birthdate of the 12th Imam-Muhammad al-Mahdi |
| 9. Ramezan | Whole month is a period of fasting and gatherings<br>15th-birth dates of 2nd Imam, Hasan ibn 'Ali and 9th Imam, Muhammad at-Taqi<br>19th-1st Imam, 'Ali is stabbed<br>21st-death date of 1st Imam, 'Ali |
| 10. Shawal | 1st-'Aid-i fitr (end of Fasting - 1968/1388 hejri)<br>25th-death date of 6th Imam Ja'far as Sadiq |
| 11. Zighadeh | 11th-birth date of eighth Imam, 'Ali ar-Reza<br>29th-death date of 9th Imam, Muhammad at-Taqi |
| 12. Zilhadjeh | 7th-death date of 5th Imam, Muhammad al-Baqir<br>10th-'Aid-i Qurban (feast of Sacrifice 1968/1388<br>15th-birth date of 10th Imam, 'Ali an-Naqi |

always engage in chest-beating rituals which close the mourning ceremonies. Those who have attended but who do not wish to participate in such flagellations usually find a convenient time to slip out of the gathering. There is no opprobrium associated with leaving a gathering at this time. In fact, at many mourning gatherings there is a continuous rozeh and people come and go. Someone may come in for a half-hour to an hour and at an opportune moment will leave. Others are constantly filing in. Some tradesmen who do not like to listen to rozehs nevertheless pay a courtesy visit to a gathering to "show their faces." Such courtesy visits are accepted as evidence of belief and piety and nothing is made of it. Those who never attend these gatherings or any other lose a great deal of prestige in the bazaar. Most therefore, whatever their true beliefs, show up to pay their respects.

Whatever the mourning occasion may be - whether it be the death of the Prophet or the martyrdom of the eighth Imam - the narration almost always ends up, in one way or another, recounting the martyrdom of Husain and his companions at Karbala and the sufferings which his captive family endured after the battle. During Muharram such rozeh gatherings reach their peak of emotional intensity and frequency. They continue also at a high pitch into the next month of Safar which commemorates the fortieth day after the death of Husain (known as 'Arba'in). Yet, as I observed and as one informant has noted,

> rozeh among the Shi'a is just a classic title. Rozehs are held throughout the year. They usually meet weekly. Every day and every night it exists. It is to acquaint people with religious matters (masa'el).

Weekly Gatherings

Such weekly religious meetings of the senfs may be arranged on either a fixed (sābet) or an itinerant (saiyār) schedule. The former indicates that the place is always the same each week and is known to the participants as is the day of the week and the time. The general gathering of the hay'at is often held on Wednesday (which is the day most preferred for hay'ats) and begins about sundown at which time most bazaaris are closing up their shops and preparing to say their evening prayers. Those meetings which are held at the same place each week - and it may be in a mosque or a husainiyeh (a meeting place to discuss religious subjects) - hire a servant(s) who makes preparations for the gathering by buying biscuits or sweets, lighting the samovar and making tea which is served to the participants shortly after they arrive for the ceremonies and again after the ceremonies have been completed. The money for this and other expenses is provided by the members of the group and collected by a representative of the group a few days before the gathering.

The itinerant meetings are similar, but more common and move weekly from one home to another. They are always held on a particular day of the week. The participants try to have it at least once a year in the home of each member and allocations of specific dates are made on a yearly basis to the individuals who regularly participate. Individuals often request that they be assigned the hay'at on or near a particular holy day which is of special significance for them. For example, one of my informants arranged it so the hay'at he would host would correspond with the birthday of the Prophet. This was the result of a vow (nazr) he had made at some previous time that if a certain wish came true he would finance a special hay'at each year to honor the Prophet's birthday. Rozeh gatherings

are also often the result of a vow made by an individual who promises to host a certain number of rozehs each year or to have an especially elaborate rozeh to honor the particular martyrdom date of one of the Imams to whom he may have addressed his intercessionary prayers. The "contract" is usually that the petitioner agrees to have a rozeh on that date for a specified number of years after which the agreement is fulfilled. Aside from the financing by individual bazaar tradesmen or collections made through the senf, individuals may also endow a rozeh through the institution or waqf whereby an amount of money is put aside on the death of an individual and used solely to finance rozeh gatherings at specified times during the year.

The structure and organization of the itinerant hay'at-i senfi is as follows: Circulars announcing the date and place of the hay'at are printed and paid for by the hosting participant. On happy and joyous occasions the circulars are printed in gold ink whereas on mourning days the circulars are printed in black, often bold type. The circulars announce the name of the hay'at (or the name of the subgroup for performing sineh-zani, see p. 193 ) and the religious occasion to be celebrated or commemorated. Included also at the bottom is the name and address of the host for the particular gathering and instructions how to reach the home by public transportation from the bazaar. One man from among the group is requested by others at the beginning of the year to act as a representative or delegate of the group (ma'mur) in order to set dates, arrange meetings and speakers, collect money and have the announcements distributed. He also acts as a master of ceremonies at the gathering, introducing speakers and maintaining order. He also leads discussions of business, personal and social problems and other "non-religious" matters that usually come up at a hay'at after the ritual performance. Often the sermon (mo'ezeh) which

is given at these hay'ats is devoted to the relationship of Islamic values, laws and injunctions to business practices. Moral advice is given such as that cheating is unacceptable behavior to a believing Muslim, or that one must be careful in certain transactions since dealing in futures or selling short are forbidden practices in Islam. In general then, those in attendance at hay'ats related to the senfs are fairly constantly informed through the sermons of the religious rules governing commercial behavior. This might be a good place to present further discussion of some of these "non-religious" matters which are discussed at the hay'ats.

Marriage arrangements may be informally discussed here. Tradesmen may discuss marriage possibilities between their respective sons and daughters or a dallal (broker) of the trade who constantly visits the various tradesmen of that senf throughout the bazaar and elsewhere as well may be consulted for his knowledge of the availability of a marriage partner. The bazaar tradesmen have considered it religiously meritorious (savab) to marry into the family of one of the ulama and such marriages are still sought by the more pious individuals - sometimes through gatherings such as the hay'at. Partly because of such patterns of intermarriage between the ulama and the tradesmen any call for bazaar solidarity vis-à-vis the government is at once a call based on a religio-political idiom as well as kinship. The bazaar tradesmen have extensive kinship ties to the ulama and hence obligations to respond to many of the religious leaders' requests for support, be it economic, political or even physical, against what they consider to be oppressive government policies. Many members of the ulama are also themselves sons of bazaar tradesmen who did not follow their fathers' profession but have chosen the "clergy" instead. There are thus many types of connections and ties between the religious hierarchy and the bazaar

tradesmen which each uses for its own particular advantage. The whole pattern of intermarriage between trading families and also between trading families and the families of religious leaders creates a strong feeling of solidarity within the bazaar.

Perhaps as an aspect of stress on morality and the application of the basic principles of Islam in daily life is the attempt, on the part of participants at a hay'at, to help orphans marry. Either individually or collectively through the hay'at, bazaar tradesmen seek out orphans who are unable to afford a proper marriage and finance the wedding and reception. Quite often the merchants assume financial responsibility for some time after the marriage or they will find a job in the bazaar for an orphaned young man whom they have helped to marry. A not uncommon practice is for a tradesman to take on a young man - orphaned or not - as a shop assistant (shagerd) in order for him to learn the business. If the assistant proves himself worthy as a businessman and a pious, morally-upright fellow, it often happens that he marries the boss' daughter or the boss' sister if she is the right age. A number of my informants had been the former assistants of their fathers-in-law or the partners of their brothers-in-law.

Announcements may also be made in the hay'at that a fellow tradesman or someone else in the bazaar is in financial difficulty and needs help. The tradesmen at the hay'at gathering discuss the situation, especially the man's reputation for honesty, piety and general morality. If they find him worthy, they usually aid the man in difficulty. There is a koranic injunction which was quoted to me to justify such behavior.

> And if any man should be in difficulties, let him have respite till things are easier; but that you should give freewill offerings is better for you, did you but know (Sura 2:280)

An individual who desires to help another tradesman in economic difficulties may request from one of the ulama (usually the marja' al-taqlid of the believer or his representative in the bazaar) that a portion of his alms (the sahm-i Imam or portion of the Imams) be allocated to help this other person. The religious leader usually accepts such a proposal. Some tradesmen feel, however, that it is not necessary to ask permission of their marja' al-taqlid and contribute money directly on the assumption that any money spent to help others in need is a pious act and therefore meritorious. Tradesmen in a hay'at gathering realize, of course, that if one of them goes bankrupt it may affect them since many of them may not only be friends and fellow tradesmen but creditors as well. Charitable acts such as this then also have their economic and "self-interest" correlates as well. It might be added here that the "good-will" of one of the religious leaders can be very helpful to a tradesman in that the former is able to use his influence and "aura of piety" to obtain financial support for him if he should every be in difficulty. It also obviously pays to have a good social credit rating in the bazaar and a reputation for piety and honesty. If a person goes bankrupt through no fault of his own his fellow merchants will in almost every instance give him economic aid, merchandise or time to get back on his feet. If, however, it is known or discovered that the tradesman has been spending his time in nightclubs or gambling or doing a number of other things which are considered not to be proper behavior then there is no sympathy for him and the tradesmen do not help him. They prefer to take a loss under these circumstances by losing whatever they may have invested in this man's enterprise. Again, though, it should be recognized that when the tradesmen find out that Mr. X has been engaging in profligate behavior they are fearful that it is their money that is being squandered and they

cut him off before the situation goes too far. Morality and piety therefore pay, while profligateness and "modern" behavior do not.

Suggestions are also made to finance the construction of a school, mosque or husainiyeh and individuals attending the hay'at usually pledge money or building materials etc., for this purpose. I attended a hay'at which was very interesting in this regard. An informant invited me to a rozeh at the home of a tradesman from the same senf as my informant to commemorate the martyrdom of the sixth Imam-Ja'far as-Sadiq. After the rozeh and flagellations (zikr mosibat-i Imam Ja'far as-Sadiq) were completed one of the religious leaders present went up on the pulpit and told the assembled people (there were about 500 persons present):

> I am one of the people who lives in a heavily crowded area. There are several schools, but unfortunately there is no Islamic school. I have suggested to the rich people of that area that they should make a nice school for teaching Islam so we can guide the people and teach them to read the Koran and understand the shari'at. This is a necessary thing. These men immediately accepted and contributed about 1,800 meters of land. [In this area of land] they can make a school building for at least 500 students and a maximum of 1,000. The land is ready today. Now I am looking for people who can help build this school.

As he concluded, someone called out "I'll give you all the bricks that are necessary for the building." Someone else said, "I'll give all the plaster"; still another offered all the lime that was needed. Because of the expense involved, several people decided to share the costs of the steel beams and girders. As these, and other tradesmen called out their contributions four men stood up and got pencil and paper and wrote down the names of the contributors and the amounts being pledged. Almost everyone gave something. My informant and I each gave 100 rials. After the pledging had concluded the religious leader asked that the amounts pledged be added up and it was

announced to the group that more than 400,000 tomans (about $53,500) had been pledged. It was also announced that a bank account would be opened for this school and anyone else who wished to contribute could put money in this account.[8]

After these events had been concluded the host of the gathering invited everyone to an elaborate lunch in the garden. The host was quite a wealthy tradesman and these events took place in his home, or rather I should say homes, for he owned three houses which were adjacent to each other. He had the walls separating the gardens torn down and therefore he had a huge garden area for entertaining several hundred guests (I counted over five hundred people with a hand-counter which I used in my field-work and there was still room for more people).

My informant commented to me afterward that pious individuals today are different than those in the past.

> Today their minds are on education and health. In previous times these same religious bazaaris would make an āb-anbār (water-storage area); a saqqā-khāneh (public drinking fountain) or a bridge. But today, their way of thinking has changed and instead of these things they build hospitals and elementary and high schools.

The bazaar tradesmen and the ulama are dissatisfied with the government-run public schools because of the de-emphasis on religious training

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[8]On enquiring whether some tradesmen would resent being invited to a rozeh gathering at which it was expected they contribute something, an informant said that many of the participants knew in advance that such a request would be made. These, in fact, were the major contributors. It is interesting to speculate why they then chose a public gathering to announce their charitable activities when the Islamic ethic enjoins such activities be kept private.

and the teaching of Arabic. They therefore find it necessary to cooperate together - as in the past - and finance the construction, equipping and staffing of religiously oriented schools. The staff consists of members of the ulama who are trained in various subjects but also laymen some of whom contribute their time freely while others receive a regular salary. Many of these are university-educated young men (and women in girls' schools) who are interested in combining the teaching of modern science and Islam. It should be obvious from these statements then that these schools are in no way "traditional" religious schools. These schools have some of the most modern facilities and laboratories in chemistry, physics and the natural sciences that I have seen anywhere as well as offering training in vocational subjects including auto-repair and the maintenance of internal-combustion engines. These classrooms were also equipped with the latest demonstration models and mechanical equipment most of which, incidentally, were imported from Germany. The graduates of these schools are trained to participate in a modern twentieth-century Iran while retaining the moral virtues of Islam.

While a particular hay'at is held once a week individual tradesmen nevertheless participate in at least two different groups each week - one associated with the occupation and the other based on friendship ties or neighborhood groups. These relationships are in addition to interaction with other bazaaris at the mosque and possibly at a Sufi gathering as well; although bazaar tradesmen have closer links with the ulama than they do with Sufi mystics.[9]

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[9]I spent a considerable time in the first stages of my field-work studying the Sufi brotherhoods in Iran since many of my initial hypotheses were based on the statements of Islamic scholars that there was a very close affinity

Ritual Activities, Trust and Order

The organized ritual gatherings are made up of participants from the bazaar, most often one's fellow tradesmen from the same occupation plus other friends and acquaintances, trading partners etc. The actual physical presence of these people at the gatherings is taken as an indication that they wish to maintain the solidarity of the status group. Their emotional responses at the gatherings are perhaps one way of judging the effectiveness of the ritual communication and their acceptance of the values transmitted. While there are numerous messages communicated at these gatherings the ones I wish to concentrate on here are those that have an essentially economic referent.

While the ritual performances associated with the drama of Husain are performed by other segments of the population throughout Iran, by far the most elaborate and organized rituals are performed by bazaar tradesmen and members of the asnaf ("guilds"). This is true not only for Iran but elsewhere as well. Robert Fernea, for example, notes that in Iraq on the tenth of Muharram-'Ashura- "several hundred men and boys, largely from the market families, participate in the ta'aziya [here meaning processions] . . . mourning

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9 cont.
between the guilds and Sufi orders. I did not find this to be the case in my research among the tradesmen of the bazaar. The majority of lay sufis I interviewed were minor bureaucrats and clerks etc., in government offices. One informant noted that many young educated Persians join Sufi orders "as an escape from the difficulties of life in Iran or from the failure of a love-relationship. They join to forget their problems. They may be frustrated by their inability to find a good job or are disgusted by the suspicion and distrust in Iran today. They therefore turn to the khaneqahs (brotherhoods) to find a peaceful and honest life" (it might be added here that this informant was himself a practicing Sufi and a physician). Some of the Sufi orders such as the Gonabadi are politically active and especially attract upwardly mobile young men in the government who seek out connections in the brotherhood. Of course, there are different types of members and some are sincere seekers of the Truth while others exploit their ties with fellow Sufis for their personal advantage or they may do both.

for the death of the religious hero which takes the form of public self-flagellation." Further on, Fernea notes that the individual teams of men that make up the processions "usually come from the same neighborhood or street within the residential area [which] are primarily occupied by the market families of Daghara" (1970:71 italics mine).

The situation in Tehran is much the same. In addition, it appears from my data that the ritual activities associated with the hay'ats and the drama of Husain are one way of emphasizing the economic and political importance of the bazaar. It may be recalled that one informant criticized the government for ignoring the bazaar despite its importance in the economy of Iran. Another informant's statement, which I referred to earlier, noted that the asnaf hold religious ceremonies "in order to show they exist." Clearly, then, in the eyes of the bazaar tradesmen themselves there is a close association between ritual performances and the broader social, economic and political situation in Iran.

Given that distrust is endemic in Iran[10] and given that trust is essential in business transactions if the economy is to operate with any degree of efficiency and speed then it would seem there is a great need among businessmen for some mechanism to operate to validate trustworthiness. In this context Cohen makes a very important point, which is that in a pre-industrial society a fair, effective and efficient judicial system is generally not well developed with the consequence that other mechanisms must be developed to cope with disputes, validation of contracts and other aspects of commercial relations.

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[10]Westwood 1965; Gastil 1958; Zonis 1968, 1971; McClelland 1963.

> In all economic systems which involve credit there are social mechanisms, both formal and informal, for the organization and maintenance of credit relations. These mechanisms are different in form, in the type of pressure they can mobilize on potential defaulters, in the motives they appeal to, and in the interests, sentiments, symbols, myths, norms, values and ideologies which they exploit. There are economic mechanisms, political mechanisms, ritual mechanisms and moral mechanisms. All these operate in all credit systems. However, credit systems vary in the degree to which the different mechanisms are exploited and in the manner in which they are combined (Cohen 1969:84 italics mine).

Cohen goes on to distinguish between western industrial society and its organization of credit which, Cohen says, places a greater emphasis on formal political and economic mechanisms and sanctions, and pre-industrial societies where greater emphasis is placed on moral and ritual mechanisms. This latter situation is due to many factors among which are the "relatively little developed means of communication, centralization and bureaucratization of economic and political functions" (ibid.: 85). While this is the case to some extent in Iran, nevertheless Iran has had a centralized government for quite a long time along with a well-structured bureaucracy. The problem in Iran however, has been a lack of confidence in these structures and an unwillingness, for the most part, to rely on the fairness and administrative efficiency of the bureaucracy. During my research, for example, the question arose as to why the bazaar tradesmen still maintain the traditional and particularistic forms of conflict resolution and solution of trading disputes such as kadkhoda-maneshi (mediation) and hakamiyat (arbitration) within the bazaar while there is the possibility of recourse to modern courts of law. The answer is complex, but it seems to boil down to the fact that, of the alternatives available, the recourse to traditional forms of conflict resolution is less expensive and less time-consuming and avoids the corruption

bribery and red-tape that are so often associated with the courts. At the same time, such particularistic processes emphasize and maintain the social ties that bind the bazaaris together. Such settlements are often processed according to Islamic guidelines with the disputants going to a religious leader who acts as a mediator and, if necessary, provides the authority of Islamic law in the case. Arbitration is more usually referred to a karshenas, that is an expert in the field in which the dispute occurs, one who is familiar with the problems of the trade and whose authority is beyond question. Such activities further strengthen the sense of solidarity in the bazaar. Thus, the persistence of "traditional" behavior in many social contexts coincides to a high degree with what is rational to do with the means available.

The guidelines and sanctions that operate in this and other contexts within the bazaar are essentially moral and religious and, also in accordance with Cohen's findings, there is a great deal of investment in social credit, in the building up of dyadic ties within the bazaar, and outside the bazaar through the kinship network. At this point, however, I wish to emphasize the ritual mechanisms that validate trustworthiness.

It is necessary within a status group, such as the tradesmen, oriented toward commerce, that among the values supported by religion would be such things as fidelity to contract, payment of debts, honest measure and the like. Such values, and others are obviously instrumental in ensuring the smooth functioning of the group's activities. Wallace stresses the importance of "identity values" and notes that the particular religious orientation of a group is:

> frequently a way of asserting an ethnic or class or racial identity in a situation of intergroup conflict, and resistance to change in religion may be based more on grounds of identity than on reluctance to adopt instrumental values more appropriate to new circumstances of the society (1966:26).

Participation in religious and ritual activities such as hay'ats and rozehs provide one such means of creating group identity and a vehicle for the transmission of "identity values" thereby providing a further validating mechanism for trustworthiness and other values necessary for the group. We have seen that often, in hay'ats, there is a sermon emphasizing the ethics and morality of Islam and there are religious leaders who stress commercial matters in their treatises and often publish booklets on the relation between trade and Islam which are distributed in the bazaar (see page 183 for an example and some excerpts). It is not necessary, however, for the narration to specifically refer to economic matters for the ritual to have economic significance. It is perhaps sufficient that those present be aware of who is there so that each of the participants may be categorized as a potential or real trustworthy person with whom their tradesmen can interact. As an informant phrased it

> . . . because they have the same profession (hamkāri) they know of each other, even if they haven't seen or met each other. They know of each other's method or manner of work. It is necessary for them to get to know each other outside their work. It is necessary for a person's benefit to get to know his fellow-workers (hamkāri). If he doesn't get this information, he won't be able to continue his work. This is why the bazaaris trust others who are religious. If someone builds or repairs a mosque, gives a rozeh or in some way shows they are religious (motadayew) people will trust that person and do business with him.

Trust is essential in business activities and is the life blood of the bazaar. A carpet merchant told me

> Trust is better than any wealth. If a person is trustworthy and he sends a telegram to Kerman and asks for 100 carpets of different sizes in seven days, he will receive what he ordered. If

> they don't trust him he will have to go to Kerman and buy his carpets. Then, they even check his money to see if it is good or not.

Thus, we can see that the structure of Shi'a Islam presents the believer with an ordered system of beliefs and injunctions. For the system to work properly man must acknowledge the bountiful gifts of God, be thankful and obediently follow the Straight Path towards salvation. It has been pointed out that ritual activities are, in fact, the basis upon which society judges a believer - if he practices the rituals, it is assumed he is a believer. In this sense, then it would be useful to follow Harper's use of the term "orthopraxy" rather than "orthodoxy" since the former emphasizes the ritual aspects of religious behavior rather than its belief content and therefore more accurately reflects the bazaar tradesman's conception of the religious man (1964:151).

The bazaar tradesmen support religious traditionalism because it provides a moral order by which they can govern their behavior in their quest for other-worldly salvation while at the same time providing order and the known in the socioeconomic realm. The action of the government in encouraging modernization and change is seen to be undermining the known order and promoting disorder and the uncertainties of the unknown.

The composition and structuring of the ritual events and the messages presented reflect order. As Rappaport observed, following Bateson, "belief, insofar as it results in nonrandom actions which lead to predictable responses, creates orderliness" (1971:69). Accepting the applicability of this idea to my data and extending it slightly we could say that "proper ritual behavior, insofar as it results in nonrandom actions which lead to predictable responses, creates trustworthiness." As far as the tradesmen of the bazaar are concerned the following equations

seem to be operative:

Orthopraxy = Trustworthiness = Order [Good]

Licentiousness = Untrustworthiness = Disorder [Bad]

The drama of Husain, which is developed in detail in Part Two of this study, is perhaps the most powerful force for the orthopractic binding together of the bazaar tradesmen of Tehran.

The "Scapegoat" Principle

Earlier, in discussing the content of the sermons at neighborhood gatherings I indicated there was little overt political content voicing opposition to the government. I did point out, however, that minority groups such as the Baha'i are attacked during the course of the ritual narration. The gatherings associated with the senf are, on the other hand, very political in content. Sometimes, as we have seen, the opposition is voiced quite directly while most often it is by subtle allusion. In this section I would like to develop the political implications of the gatherings a bit more as a way of leading up to the discussion of the multivocality of the symbol of Husain in Part Two.

In a previous section I quoted part of a narration commemorating the martyrdom of Imam Musa ibn Ja'far (see page 108). The following is the preceding portion of that narrative - the portion which discusses the physical tortures of the Imam.

> Let me tell you some of the things he [Haroun al Rashid] has done to him. First he has put him in a jail for 14 years - far from his house, children, wife--everything. For fourteen years--not fourteen months or fourteen weeks or fourteen hours or fourteen minutes--I MEAN FOURTEEN YEARS [participants are weeping and moaning]. He was in a cell all by himself and they would torture him [loud outbursts of moaning and weeping]. They

would connect a water hose to his cell and his cell was so small and damp that he couldn't sit or sleep. This was one way to torture him.

Then he gave Musa ibn Ja'far to Sendi ibn Shaveh who was a Jew and was chief of police [darugheh] in Baghdad [loud weeping and flailing of hands, wailing]. DEATH TO A GOVERNMENT WHOSE CHIEF OF POLICE IS A JEW AND THE GOVERNMENT CLAIMS IT IS MUSLIM [shouted in an intense emotional pitch]. Haroun was the Muslim caliph yet his chief of police was Sendi ibn Shaveh--A JEW--and people were following this Haroun.[11]

The Prophet has said the worst nation which has given us a hard time are the Jews. We have never suffered as much as we have from the Jews. GOD! I SWEAR BY THE TRUTH OF MUSA IBN JA'FAR THAT YOU SHOULD SAVE THESE FEW MUSLIMS IN THE WORLD FROM THE JEWS [all the participants shouted in unison-AMEN (àla amin)].

This Jew wanted to avenge all the hatred he has for Islam, the Koran and the Prophet. He wanted to take it out on this child of Islam. Those people who have been near the sea know that if you dig one meter, the water will come out and the ground will become damp. This Jew put him in a deep jail cell in Baghdad with chains on his legs and neck [participants begin loud wailing and moaning].

In this narration two terms of great negative association are mentioned in the same context - JEW AND POLICE CHIEF (darugheh). It is bad enough that a government official is torturing an Imam, but that he is also a Jewish government official, especially a police chief, is the most heinous crime of crimes. The use of these words in association is an

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[11] He is trying to say here that Haroun al Rashid was a Muslim caliph and as such an example for the religious behavior of his subjects who followed his guidance. Yet he allowed a Jew to police Muslims. It might be mentioned that the bazaar tradesmen and ulama objected to the appointment of a Belgian Jew--Nauss--to the post of Director-General of Customs during the Constitutional period (1905-1911). Their reaction was so intense that Nauss was forced out by the newly elected parliament (See Schuster 1912, p. 22).

- Please note that the capital letters indicate a loud, emotional stressing of these words by the narrator.

exceedingly effective way of getting across a number of messages to the participants. It arouses their latent anti-Jewish feelings, their latent anti-Israel feelings, their latent anti-Jewish merchant attitudes (especially those who are successful), their hostility to Jews for having had greater educational opportunities than themselves, etc. I will discuss each of these points in somewhat greater detail below.

The present government is compared by implication to the government of Haroun ar-Rashid in several ways. First, is the implicit understandings in popular Shi'ism of the materialism of the orthodox caliphs - leaders who were working in their own selfish interests to the neglect of the Muslim community. Haroun's lack of interest in the Muslim community is also seen, and brought out by the narrator, in his non-recognition of the legitimacy of Musa as the rightful spiritual (and secular) leader of the Muslims.

The ulama are seen by the Iranian Shi'a as the spiritual heirs of the Imams. They feel they are persecuted by the present government and transmit this to the audience and an identification is thereby made in the minds of the participants between Haroun's persecution of Imam Musa and the present Shah's policies.[12] The analogy is strengthened when it is seen that the present Shah has engaged Israeli advisors to help the Iranian

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[12]Algar (1972:250-51) notes that a number of opponents of the government have been physically tortured and Algar reports on the torturing and death of a prominent Tehran religious leader. A publication of the Canadian "Committee to Defend Political Prisoners in Iran" speaks of a "group of clergymen and bazaar shopkeepers" who have been imprisoned and tortured. The article incidentally was written by Bertrand Russell and entitled "Inside the Shah's Prisons" (There is no title nor date of publication to this pamphlet).

government pursue its policies of modernization and development.[13] When the rozeh khan says, DEATH TO A GOVERNMENT WHOSE CHIEF OF POLICE IS A JEW AND THE GOVERNMENT CLAIMS IT IS MUSLIM every one of the participants at the rozeh knows what is meant.

It should be pointed out that the host of a gathering or the representative of the senf is the person who chooses a particular religious leader to speak on any specific occasion. The participants, therefore, have control over who is to speak and know full well what his religio-political views are. In short, they choose and pay speakers for what they want to hear - they are not completely a captive audience at the mercy of the speaker. On the other hand the way the religious leaders view the situation, they are rather at the mercy of the wishes of the masses.[14] Some of the religious leaders say that the public generally confine their demands upon the religious leaders to the performance of ritual activities such as rozeh narrations and do not allow them to be concerned with more abstract, theological matters. One religious leader in particular, Sayyed Muhammad

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[13]E. A. Bayne in his book of conversations with the Shah notes: "Tactically, the Iranians have established close relations with Israel, involving trade (including petroleum), air rights, technical assistance, and a limited degree of military staff coordination . . . the Shah has come to admire the new country for its record of rapid development. For the Shah, perhaps, the relationship has a hard core in the common apprehension of Arab expansion. It began with quiet ties between intelligence services, and retains this mutual security interest . . . virtually every general officer in the Shah's army has visited Israel, and hundreds of Iranian junior officers have undergone some aspects of Israeli training (1968:212).

[14]The religious leaders have their own mechanisms and sanctions for ensuring conformity to the point of view which they espouse at rozeh gatherings. Informants told me of a rozeh khan in the bazaar who supported the Shah's policies of modernization and restricting the political activities of the religious leaders. In retaliation for this traitorous behavior, as they saw it, other rozeh khans forcefully shaved his beard (an insult) and stuffed the hair into his anus (the epitome of degradation).

Beheshti, alleges that the religious leaders themselves deplore this tendency. In his view, the basic problem confronting the religious institution in Iran today is the ignorance of the masses whom, he says, are opposed to reform whether within the religious structure itself or in the country as a whole. For example, "various attempts at improving the education of the tullab (theology students) . . . have proved abortive because of the narrow view taken by the masses, who held that the funds they gave should be devoted only to the teaching of fiqh" [Islamic law] (Lambton 1964:135).[15] While this may be true to some extent, I believe the ulama are overstating their case. According to bazaar tradesmen, they are the ones who are under the thumb of the religious leaders and it is the latter who oppose change.

Attitudes towards the Jews in the Bazaar

In order to understand the full implications of what I have stated here about the bazaari attitudes towards the Jews, I would like to present here some of the views of my informants towards the Jews.

Jews have a very low status in the world view of the Shi'a Muslims of the bazaar. They are considered ritually polluted (najes) and impure in the eyes of religious bazaar merchants. Many Jewish tradesmen and merchants told me of the abuses which they must suffer at the hands of some of these people. One tradesman mentioned that when pious Muslims enter his shop to do business they would turn the door knob not with a bare hand, but with the sleeve of their shirt pulled down over their hand to cover

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[15] Whatever the merits of the statement, there is no doubt that tradesmen and merchants are very much interested in understanding the applicability of Islamic law or fiqh to their business activities and would therefore most likely encourage the study of law as against philosophy.

direct contact with the door knob, or they would pick up the telephone receiver with a newspaper or a handkerchief or some other handy item to avoid direct contact with objects polluted by contact with the Jews. This is, of course, the direct opposite of the idea that one can receive barakat by contagion - here one may be polluted by contagion. Muslim traders themselves told me that if a Jew ever visited a Muslim home and ate food the dishes would be kept separate and sterilized afterwards, and in the past, I was told, it was not uncommon for people to sweep after a Jew as he walked past one's home or shop in the bazaar in order to avoid contamination.

Although Muslim tradesmen do business with Jews they believe that all Jews are untrustworthy.

> A Jew cannot be a good man. I have seen two Jews who went bankrupt and both of them ran away and they couldn't be found. Among Jews, in my opinion, you cannot find a good (sālem) person. They cheat and are deceitful.

Another tradesman commented:

> In general, Muslims are the enemy of the Jewish people. The Muslims have the power and that means that if a Jew goes bankrupt and owes money to a Muslim, not only he won't be forgiven but he will be charged more too.

Again:

> Muslims cannot get along with Jews because the basic characteristic of a Muslim is truthfulness and the Jews do not have this. Christians are not like the Jews. They may have a maximum of two businesses but not more. The Jews not only buy and export carpets, they also export pistachio nuts, sheep skins, gum tragacanth (katira). He deals in many different kinds of items and in different countries. Muslims are satisfied with one good business.

At a rozeh during Muharram, one religious leader criticized the Jews

for having buildings taller than those of Muslims.

> This is a suffering and hardship for Muslims to see all those high buildings. You all know who they belong to.[16] In this country they [i.e., the government of Iran] are cooperating with the enemies of the Muslims [i.e., the Jews]. Who steals the Muslim's wealth and gives it to the Zionists and international Jews? Who are taking Muslim women from chastity? They are all non-Muslims. They are enemies. If a government, let us suppose that it is not in our country, cooperates with them, WHAT IS THE DUTY OF THE PEOPLE? If a government opens an Embassy for them in secret[17] and the Ministers and Heads of Islamic governments go there for drinking and laughing and having fun--WHAT IS THE DUTY OF THE PEOPLE IN RELATION TO SUCH A GOVERNMENT? A GOVERNMENT WHICH DOESN'T FOLLOW ISLAMIC LAWS DOESN'T HAVE THE RIGHT TO GOVERN MUSLIM PEOPLE. YOU TELL ME IF I AM RIGHT OR NOT!

The point that emerges from these interviews and the comments of religious leaders and tradesmen is that there is a strongly negative attitude toward the Jews in the bazaar which is a combination of many things such as (1) the traditional negative Muslim and Koranic views of the Jews; (2) the conception of the Jew as ritually polluted - a view much stronger, for some reason, among the Shi'a than among the Sunni; (3) the conception of Jews as untrustworthy and deceitful; (4) the fear of Jewish merchants and creditors because of their general wealth and economic success; (5) the resentment of greater educational opportunities which the Jews have had

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[16]The reference here is to the Plasco building which was, at the time of the narration, owned by a wealthy Jewish businessman by the name of Ilghānīān--a former bazaar merchant.

[17]At the time of this rozeh Iran had granted de-facto but not de-jure recognition to Israel and permitted Israel to open quasi-diplomatic offices in Tehran to handle business and other activities such as arranging for Israelis to advise various government agencies, in particular the ministry of agriculture which was handling land reform.

vis-à-vis Muslims (see page 73 in chapter 2 ); and finally, (6) hostility towards the Jews because of the Arab-Israeli conflict and the more or less automatic sympathy for Arab Muslims and their struggle. In problems of conflict resolution in the bazaar Muslim tradesmen side with their co-religionists in the dispute regardless of fault. The Jews do the same. When I raised a question about the application of "justice" to disputes of this type, informants found my question rather amusing and one Jewish informant noted that it is natural for each side in a dispute to support those with a similar ideological perspective:

> The communist nations support North Vietnam while the democratic nations support the United States despite the rightness or wrongness of the cause--so in the bazaar.

An interesting incident arose during fieldwork which emphasizes quite clearly the lengths the Muslim tradesmen will go to to avoid unnecessary interaction with the Jews in the bazaar.

In May, 1968 there were international soccer playoffs held in Iran and the two teams in the final competition for the (I believe) Asian Cup were the Israeli and Iranian teams. On the day of the match rumors were spreading throughout Tehran and the bazaar that a wealthy Iranian Jew-Ilghāniān - had bought some 16,000 tickets to the games in order to prevent Muslims (sic) from cheering for their team. There were then rumors that a mob had proceeded to the Plasco building, which is owned by Ilghāniān, to burn it down but they were supposedly prevented from doing so by the Iranian army. Other rumors were to the effect that the Iranian intelligence agency (SAVAK) had quickly printed up thousands of additional tickets in order to head off rioting and chaos. As it turned out, there was no general violence and the Iranian team won the match and the championship. One wonders what

would have happened had the Israeli team won.

A week or two later I attended a hay'at of the carpet merchants. At this gathering, it was decided to honor the victorious Iranian soccer team by presenting each team member with a small carpet of equal size, color and design. Collections were begun at this hay'at and continued throughout the bazaar of the carpet merchants over the next several weeks. Some 36,000 tomans (about $4,500) was collected and each athlete received a carpet worth about 5,000 tomans (about $350-400.00). The contributions began as a voluntary gesture but various respected members of the profession "pulled their weight" and word was passed that the contributions were compulsory. There is, of course, no formal sanction which can be brought to bear should someone not contribute. I asked an informant at this time if all religious groups represented in the senf participated in the contributions. The answer was:

> No, in fact it was all Muslim. The Jews collected about 60,000 tomans (sic)--the bastards[18]--but we didn't accept it from them because of religious reasons.

The football match then was not seen as a contest between two sporting teams, nor even really, as the teams of two nations; but as two religious groups in competition. In other situations, however, money will be accepted from all religious groups and individuals (with a few exceptions). For example, the carpet merchants decided at another hay'at to collect money for earthquake victims in the province of Khorasan. Again, money was pledged

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[18]The informant used the phrase pedar sukhteh-hā here which has no clear English equivalent. Literally it means "their fathers burn in hell," but in the tone in which it was used here, the highly negative connotation of the English word "bastards" is perhaps the best single word that can be used to convey the sense of nastiness intended.

at the hay'at by the bazaar tradesmen, a bank account was opened for anyone to donate money and members of senf went around the bazaar seeking money for these unfortunate people. Under these circumstances people of all religious groups were asked to contribute. I recall listening to a conversation between a canvasser and a tradesman, obviously (by the tone of the conversation) not a Muslim. It went something like this:

> Aren't you a human being? I am not
> interested if you are a Muslim or not,
> I am asking you if you are a human being.
> If you are, where is your sense of mercy?

If something is seen as the responsibility of all human beings, such as helping the victims of natural disasters, then almost anyone will be asked to help. If it is related, or seen to relate in some way, to religion, then contributions are only sought from fellow Muslims. I mentioned that "almost anyone's" money will be accepted because it was brought out by several informants that money which is believed to be "contaminated" (aludeh) will not be accepted under any circumstances. Persons who accept usury were specifically singled out in this context. Such discriminatory action further reinforces other practices of alienation and ostracism for one who does not conform to the moral standards of the community.

If we can view the money which the usurer, for example, offers as charity as "conscience money" to placate a tormented soul then it seems that the members of the senf refuse the individual even that dispensation. This seems to be an ideal, however, used perhaps under certain circumstances to chastise a particular tradesman for reasons best known to the individuals concerned.

The idea that "contaminated" wealth cannot be used for religious purposes comes out clearly in the statement of the informant who felt he could not

use some of his ill-gotten money for a pilgrimage to Mecca which I discussed earlier. The religious benefits (barakat, savab) would be cancelled out in the event he did go (not to mention his social credit since presumably others in the bazaar knew of his ill-gotten wealth).

In a later section I interpret the Husain mourning rituals, especially the patterns of self-flagellation and mortification, as rites of purification for a sense of guilt in not living up to the demands of Islamic law in one's daily life and especially in matters of trade and commerce. Perhaps the same conceptual idea of punishment can be applied to the hostility of the tradesmen towards the Jews and other minority groups such as the Baha'i and Christians. Interestingly enough, such hostility is never directed against the Zoroastrian minority of whom the bazaaris generally have nothing but praise.

In the process of self-flagellation and mortification the tradesman is, in effect, negating strong positive inclinations or perhaps even actions already accomplished; it is a deliberate "slaying" of any motive or desire that for particular doctrinal reasons one finds unacceptable, threatening or unruly. The very act of mortification is an act of "virtue" for the flagellant "purifies" himself by projecting his internal, psychological conflicts upon a scapegoat, his body. He seeks a sacrificial victim upon whom he can release the turmoil and tension within. Burke discusses the principle of the negative in relation to the scapegoat idea and comments:

> . . . a dramatistic analysis shows how the negativistic principle of guilt implicit in the nature of order combines with the principles of thoroughness (or "perfection") and substitution that are characteristic of symbol systems in such a way that the sacrificial principle of victimage (the "scapegoat") is intrinsic to human congregation. The intricate line of exposition might be

> summed up thus: if order, then guilt; if guilt, then need for redemption; but any such "payment" is victimage (1968:450).

The scapegoat principle is an inherent aspect of the Shi'a world view. Historically, the whole of the Shi'a community is viewed as the victim of Sunni oppressors (which, in actual fact, it has often been). The Shi'a have been persecuted and executed for their heresy, as the Sunnis have viewed it at times. But, even when there has been no overt hostility or persecution as, for example, when Shi'ism was made the official state religion of Iran under the Safavids in the sixteenth century, a sense of victimage persisted and today informs the whole world view of the Shi'a. The environment (in the broadest sense) to an Iranian Shi'a is seen as threatening, a perception in which the directionality involved is <u>from</u> the environment toward the person, so that he is viewed as an effect, and various external factors, as cause. A person in such a cultural situation would not likely hold himself accountable when things go wrong and would generally react by turning anger and hostility outward toward others - perceived Sunni oppressors, an arbitrary and unjust government, imperialists, agents of change and modernization, minority groups such as Jews, Baha'i etc.[19]

The scapegoat principle is, indeed, pervasive throughout Iranian Shi'a society. The ulama use the ignorance of the masses as their scapegoat,

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[19]There is much that is implicit in this view that leans heavily on culture and personality studies, especially implications about child-rearing practices and adult personality which I have not touched upon in this study. It is also implied by my phrasing that Iranians are paranoid. Rather, it should be stated that certain status groups in Iran have a strong paranoidal cast to the personality which might tend toward paranoidal forms of mental illness, if, and when, they develop.

blaming them for all the failures of the religious institution and its inability to keep pace with the twentieth century. Government officials blame the public and each other for their own failings. This is clearly seen in the discrepant statements of whom to blame in the chronic meat shortage of Tehran.

> Tehran municipality yesterday disclaimed any responsibility for the scarcity of meat in Tehran and said the supply of meat was the responsibility of the Ministry of Agricultural Products and Consumer Goods.
>
> Ministry officials said yesterday that one of the main causes for the short supply was closure of most national highways and unforseen delays in receiving sheep from outlying regions.
>
> Another cause which was said to have contributed to the short supply of meat was that in Tehran authorities had controlled the price of mutton at 295 rials for every three kilograms while the same quantity fetched up to 317 rials in the provinces with the result that many sheep breeders were supplying the provincial towns rather than carting their animals to Tehran.
>
> While municipal and slaughterhouse officials admitted yesterday there was a shortage, they blamed housewives who are hoarding against a complete dry up in supplies for making the shortage worse (On Saturday slaughterhouse officials were quoted as saying there was no shortage only the butchers were hoarding in order to raise prices).
>
> As the meat shortage in Tehran continues the Meat Organization of the Ministry of Agricultural Products and Consumer Goods stated yesterday that the main cause of the present shortage was a complete stoppage of supplies from Turkey.
>
> (The above quotes are taken from newspaper clippings the dates of which, I have unfortunately neglected to note. The period is roughly December, 1968).

The Minister of Health, Manuchehr Shahgholi, in discussing the reasons for the rapidly rising doctors' fees in Tehran said he did not believe that doctors were always after money, rather:

> If fees charged are high, we must blame the people for it. As long as people are prepared to pay high fees instead of consulting doctors who charge less the present situation will continue (Kayhan 7/21/68).

An editorial writer, commenting on the logic of Dr. Shahgholi's statements, noted that it is possible to blame the people for everything.

> They are responsible for shortages because they want things in short supply; and why don't they use candles to avoid suffering from power failures and if the price of meat is too high it is because the people refuse to become vegetarians and so on (Kayhan 7/21/68).

And finally,

> Tehran Mayor Javad Shahrestani yesterday blamed previous municipal administrations for the recent flooding of South Tehran [note, this is the area of the bazaar] and said it was not his administration which was responsible for the sad conditions there. . . .
>
> On January 26, the mayor recalled, a leading citizen of Tehran asked him to remove flood waters from in front of the Bazaar. Perhaps he was right in expecting this from the municipality, Shahrestani said he told him that steps to prevent flood waters from gathering in front of the bazaar should have been taken years ago and it was not possible for the municipality with its present means to accomplish in a matter of days or even months what had not been done for years (Tehran Journal 1/30/69).

Thus, it can be seen that the scapegoat principle applies not only to religious symbolism but to other aspects of Iranian society. In the public realm the scapegoat principle takes the form of blaming others for one's own evasions of responsibility resulting in an overall lack of public consciousness which is further reinforced by strong, particularistic

kinship ties to the detriment of the integration of society at large.[20]

Basic to the Shi's perspective, then, is the principle of the negative and the rozeh narrations stress the stylistic importance of antithesis as a means of persuasion. That is, the particular theologic perspective of the Shi'a is recommended and enjoined in terms, largely, of what it is against. The use of the symbol of the Jews in the narration, no doubt reflects the attitudes of tradesmen toward the Jews in the bazaar and in Tehran in general. The Jews are perceived as an enemy which all share in common and the narrator has the rhetorical advantage of speaking for "us" vis-à-vis "them." The rozeh khan becomes, in a sense, the spokesman for the bazaar community and he can prod his audience to consider local ills primarily in terms of alien figures who are seen as outstanding causes of those ills. Barth also considers the critical features of an ethnic group to be its "characteristic of self-ascription and ascription by others" (1969:13). This implies boundary maintenance and a sense of distinctiveness which creates and reinforces an "us-them" division.

The Jews, in my interpretation of the data, are singled out to some extent because of the various reasons noted, especially because, perhaps, they are the "traditional" enemies of Islam and hence fair game; but more importantly for my purposes, the Jews are really only one symbol among

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[20] In an article analyzing the content of children's readers in Turkey and Iran, McClelland summarizes a story and its moral which has direct relevance to my point, albeit from a different perspective. ". . . two boys fall to arguing over who should get a walnut they find. They finally call on a passerby to serve as a judge in the classic Moslem tradition. He gives one half of the shell to one boy, the other half to the other boy, and eats the kernel himself as his wages for deciding the dispute. The moral must be clear, even to third-grade children: authority is bad; government is bad; society in the abstract is bad; it only exploits the individual and steals from him (1963:178).

many of the principle of vicarious victimage so common to the Shi'a and especially the bazaar tradesmen. In any given situation one victim can be substituted for another with essentially the same effect vis-à-vis the cosmic significance of the scapegoat principle. The hostility towards the Jews, then, is but a special case of the principle of dualism and complementary opposition so common to the bazaari world view.

## CONCLUSION

It is through the hay'ats that individuals have an opportunity to meet and discuss the economic and political situation of the bazaar or new government policies (such as the current rumour that part of the bazaar will be demolished in order to modernize the facilitate the distribution process in the city), or simply to arrange a marriage between respective sons and daughters. It is here that networks of interpersonal relations are formed and extended or links in the networks are dropped. It is through these interpersonal networks and the participation of the same individuals in several different gatherings during the week that bazaar information, ideas and rumors are passed on. Participants in these religious gatherings are mixed and include not only merchants and tradesmen but also religious leaders, workers and porters and some government bureaucrats as well. It is thus through these, and others, networks of social relations and communication that the norms, values and attitudes of the religious institution and the moral community of the bazaar flow upward to the elite and the government while, at the same time, those of the elite percolate down to the bazaar and the rest of the urban community.

These hay'at gatherings are closely associated with the ritual calendar of Shi'a Islam as I have noted earlier. More particularly the Shi'a strongly emphasize the sad, the traumatic and the negative in their rituals (a

point which I discuss in detail in the next section). Pre-eminent in the commemorative hay'at and rozeh gatherings is the drama of Husain which, as has so often been stated by many authors, epitomizes the ethos of Shi'ism and thereby exclaims the world view of the bazaar tradesmen.

## CHAPTER SIX

## THE DRAMA OF HUSAIN AND THE PROCESSES OF SOCIAL CHANGE

In developing nations the relationship between religion and the processes of sociopolitical change has been varied and multiplex. In many respects in societies with religious systems where law is understood as a divine command, as in Islam, the secularization of the political structure becomes a prerequisite for significant social change (see Niyazi Berkes "The Development of Secularism in Turkey," 1964 for perhaps the finest study dealing with the processes of change in a Muslim country). In Iran even the laws regulating marriage, divorce and inheritance, which in most traditional societies remain the last bastion of the religious concept of law, are increasingly being secularized. In pursuing social reform it is considered essential that the government intervene and implement man-made laws which will better serve the changing needs of society. Obviously, such attempts at government reform are not going unchallenged. Note the following statements from an ulama informant:

> A religion must be a religion of justice, that means it must look at all of the people with the same eye. Everyone must be equal in front of the law. The law cannot, therefore, be made by man because people are not all the same. Everyone thinks he is right and everyone has different ideas. So the law should come from a source higher than anyone else so everyone accepts it and respects the law.
>
> The legislator must be above everyone else in knowledge, wisdom and scholarship and he must be able to understand all creatures so that his laws are acceptable to everyone. The legislator cannot be one of the people. If even all the people get together

> and make a law, first of all their mind [sic] doesn't have perception. Everyone has understanding according to his knowledge. One person cannot have knowledge about everything and everybody, so how can he judge and make a law? Even if he makes the law that law has only enough depth equal to his knowledge, so there should be a power beyond any other. But a man cannot have this power. He cannot claim that he knows as much as God. People accept the shar'iat when they know it has come from the highest source.

Basic to the Islamic world view is the concept of tawhid or unity. This concept does not only refer to the idea that God is One - la ilaha illa lah - (the first line of the Shahadah or profession of faith, literally "there is no God but God"), but also to the idea that

> man should not be compartmentalized either in his thoughts or actions. Every action, even the manner of walking and eating, should manifest a spiritual norm which exists in his mind and heart (Nasr 1966:29).

On the ideal social plane, unity and order are expressed in the integration of the Muslim community through the medium of the Shari'ah or Divine Law. Being the embodiment of the Divine Will the Law is unchangeable. Seyyed Husain Nasr comments that

> The Shari'ah corresponds to a reality that transcends time and history. Rather, each generation in Muslim society should seek to conform to its teachings and apply it anew to the conditions in which it finds itself. The creative process in each generation is not to remake the law but to reform men and human society to conform to the Law. According to the Islamic view religion should not be reformed to conform to the ever changing and imperfect nature of men but men should reform so as to live according to the tenets of revelation. In accordance with the real nature of things, it is the human that must conform to the Divine and not the Divine to the Human (Nasr 1966:96).

To a believing Shi'a Muslim then, Islam is a complete way of life and sufficient as a guide for all believers. Within the Koran, hadith and the traditions of the Imams and the opinions and injunctions of the spiritual

heirs of the Imams - the Shi'a ulama - are to be found all sources of knowledge and guidelines for behavior.

> Islam is based on knowledge and is not separated from it. . . . Therefore, if science progresses it cannot affect the laws of Islam . . . because no knowledge can be higher than God's and in Islam all knowledge comes from God.

Modern technology and science are, therefore, not incompatible to my informants with Islam.

If this is the case, from where does the so-called conflict between traditionalism and modernization arise? The answer appears to be that it arises from the attempt by a western-oriented, secular government to transform a society and its underlying value system. Religiously oriented bazaar tradesmen oppose what they perceive to be the social, ethical, and moral accompaniments of western civilization and technology - features which they feel might undermine Islam and an Islamic way of life and the benefits which they have derived from an association of Islam and trade. My informants see modernization and economic development as necessarily moral and religious problems; and hence much of the opposition to modernization and social change in Iran today is phrased in a religious idiom.[1] Central to such opposition as expressed by the bazaar tradesmen is their perception of the significance of the martyrdom of Husain.

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[1] Eric Sunderland has stated this view very succinctly: "a religious dance is often only symbolic of a perception of threat to the total cultural configuration of which religion is but a part" (1968:668). Yet Sunderland, despite his facility with words, seems unable to break loose from the cognitive categories of modern secularized society in which religion is a rationalized Great Tradition on the periphery of social life. Strictly speaking Islam, as a Muslim sees it, is not "part" of the total, but <u>is the totality</u>.

The Latent Revolutionary Tendencies of the Shi'a

During the period of the Constitutional Revolution (1905-1911) patriotism hardly existed except as a religious sentiment. Nationalism based on the territorial state, as in Europe, was almost unknown and protests against the encroachment of foreigners were phrased as violations of the "countries of Islam" and the "Muslims" rather than of "Persia" and the "Persians." Those seeking reforms were aware that if western political, economic and ideological domination was to be countered it must be done in the name of Islam. The effort to win popular support for the movement was expressed through the medium of traditional groups in society such as the various voluntary associations and the senf ("guilds") which were dominated by a strong religious idiom. Secret societies were organized similar to those of the extreme religious sects of medieval Islam such as the Isma'ili and the Akhi brotherhoods and perhaps also the Babi secret societies of the nineteenth century. After the assassination of Nasir ed-Din Shah in 1896 these societies became even more active. As the movement gained momentum and its support widened so the nature of the movement itself changed. Members of the religious classes became leaders of the movement since it was they who enjoyed greater public respect than any other group. In addition, they acted as a shield for the people from the pressures of the government and it was to them that the people looked for protection. The religious leaders also had a virtual monopoly over the dissemination of learning and the people looked to them for guidance which tended to have somewhat of an aura of infallibility in that they were acting in the name of God, the prophet and the Imams. At a meeting of one of the secret societies during Muharram 1323/March 1905, it was proclaimed that Imam Husain was the prototype of all founders of secret

societies. Of the various articles of association which were drafted by the members, article 4 states that the society "was constituted under the auspices of the blessed name of the Mahdi and that no person would be designated as its leader; all members would act collectively. Article 5 lays down that at the end of each meeting a rawzeh would be read" (Lambton, 1958:55). I will leave it to historians to document the instrumental use of a religious idiom in the context of the Constitutional Revolution. I do wish to point out, however, that a precedent was established during this period of organizing voluntary associations focused around the symbol of Husain, ostensibly for the purpose of discussing religious subjects but which in reality was a cover for a more clandestine purpose. Members were held together by the religious idiom, by their discontent with existing conditions and a belief in the need for change and "modernization" in order to combat despotism and foreign aggression. These voluntary associations created a sense of a community of interest and provided people in widely separated districts and occupations with the courage to act.

One aspect of the world view of the Shi'a is that they are continually seeking a better world. If one looks at the world from an eschatological perspective the whole of history becomes restructured. Historical events become mythologized as the past is reinterpreted while contemporary events are seen in the light of a perfect world. As one Iranian religious leader has noted:

> . . . the tragedy of the martyrdom of Imam Husain has become the center of all the phenomena of Islamic history and revolutions and none of the other revolutions and martyrdoms together appear like the rise of the Lord of Martyrs [Husain] in the world (Ayati 1963/64:141-142).

The late historian and Islamic scholar, Marshall Hodgson, once commented to the writer that "the Shi'a is always a potential latent revolutionary." The entire process of Islamic history is viewed as a continuous decline from the perfection of the golden age of the Prophet. The Shi'a await the Mahdi but meanwhile strive to achieve the goals inherent in Shi'a theological doctrines. If everything were satisfactory and perfect it would indicate the presence of the Mahdi and the end of the ghaybat-i kubra and hence no further need for striving or change.[2] But this is not the case. One participates in this world and realizes it is not perfect. The fundamentalist religious explanation of this decline from a pristine past is a continuous drifting away from the early simplicity of Islam through centuries of innovations especially the incorporation of extra-Islamic elements in Muslim canon law (see Ahmad 1967). This is seen to be the result of a conscious, premeditated policy of Islamic rulers who no longer follow the policy to "enjoin the good and prohibit the bad." One informant told me

> If we had good leaders Islam would have progressed. We have examples from history. For example, Salman was governor of some cities and he governed wisely. All people were perfect. There was no stealing, there was no complaining from others, all were brothers. When there had been stealing the thief had always been from other cities; he had been a foreigner.

Another informant commented that the government encourages the publication of sex magazines with suggestive articles and pictures of naked women with

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[2]The ghaybat-i kubra or "Greater Occultation" is the period that began with the disappearance of the twelfth Imam in the ninth century and which continues, in the present, until the reappearance of the twelfth Imam or Mahdi who will inaugurate a reign of justice and truth. The expectation of the Mahdi is one of the fundamental tenets of Twelver Shi'ism for which one receives savab or religious merit.

the aim of corrupting the youth of the country and leading them away from religion. The government is perceived as consciously leading believers away from the straight path because their policies are not imbued with religious direction. Given the assumptions of the Shi'a there are two ideal possible courses of action. First, is the return of the Mahdi - the savior who will redeem the world and rule with absolute justice. Since this is not a likely prospect, there is, therefore, no such thing as a perfect government in the absence of the Mahdi. Under such conditions the second best and only legitimate government is that of the ulama who are the representatives of the Imams. Failing this is the situation which Nasr mentions, namely a monarchy or sultanate which "rules with the consent of the ulama" (1966:107) which he presumably feels is the present situation. Yet under present circumstances the Shah of Iran and his father before him engaged in practices of reform and modernization that have led to a whole series of changes in the social, legal, economic, political and educational structure of Iranian society. They have done this without the consent of the ulama and, in fact, with the open opposition of the religious groups (Algar 1972; Keddie 1972). If we compare such facts with Nasr's statements we can only conclude that the religious leaders and those with a similar orientation do not consider the present government of Iran to be a legitimate one since it rules <u>without the consent of the ulama</u>. What can be done then to alleviate this situation in which evil and injustice are perceived to flourish in society? One answer to this question can be found in the rozeh of one of the Shi'a ulama in the bazaar of Tehran.

> If we cry for Imam Husain, it is because he is the one who was sent by God to rise up and bring justice to human beings. So <u>right now</u>, if we want to have justice among human beings we should bring Imam Husain

> back to life. . . . Imam Husain still asks for help. He says, "Come to the battlefield and help me." What should I do? I have to follow him. How? By rising against tyranny (zolm) and oppression (setam). That is, I don't consider it more important to obey created beings to the Creator.

Thus, at the very center of Shi'a thought, at least as it is conceived within the bazaar of Tehran, is the revolutionary drama of Husain.

I purposely used the phrase "drama of Husain" for a drama always occurs only where there is a dynamic opposition between the principal actors. Within the drama of Husain as portrayed in myth and ritual and indeed, although somewhat less significantly, in the dramas of the other Shi'a Imams as well, is an intense spiritual drama pitting the forces of "good" against the forces of "evil." Izutsu notes that

> The Quranic outlook divides all human qualities into two radically opposed categories which - in view of the fact that they are too concrete and semantically too pregnant to be called 'good' and 'bad' or 'right' and 'wrong' - we might simply call the class of positive moral properties and the class of negative moral properties respectively . . . In fact, throughout the Qur'an there runs the keynote of dualism regarding the moral values of man: the basic dualism of believer and unbeliever (1966:105).

This fundamental dichotomy appears in many guises in the myth of Husain and further in the world view of the bazaar tradesmen of Tehran. On one level of analysis then, the following pages will present an explication of the multivocal aspects of the symbolism inherent in the Shi'a and Islamic world view. At this level of analysis it is postulated that the myth of Husain is symbolic of certain transcendent truths and reflects basic unresolved conflicts of mankind.

But the abstract, transcendental world of spiritual forces is also perceived, at times, as the social world symbolically transformed. At

each period in Iranian history religious symbols have functioned to portray the otherworldly orientation of believing Muslims while at the same time portraying certain aspects of the processes of social life in Iran as experienced and perceived by particular status groups. In other words, symbols are given meaning by social actors in particular social contexts. As Anthony Wallace has shown

> A given symbol, of course, need not have the same meaning for all; the meaning, indeed, resides in the perceiver rather than in the symbol itself. Thus, the meaning of a symbol may change over time and, of course, differ from person to person and group to group. Symbols of this kind are apt to be central organizing points in a personality or in an ideology, bringing together diverse domains of experience and producing a kind of consistency and character in behavior on a very abstract level (1970:93).

In referring to the "drama of Husain" I have often used the term "myth." While the events surrounding the martyrdom of Husain are historical and "actually happened" this lamentable occasion was transformed little by little in the imagination of the Shi'a into an event of incalculable importance. Husain ceased to belong to history and as the legend took hold he has become for the Shi'a a largely mythical figure. To assuage the sensitivities of Muslims who may read this study myth is used here in the anthropological sense and has no connotation of being true or false. Myths are concerned with ultimate reality, with events of cosmological importance. They are accounts of supernatural powers and often concern the formulation of laws and ethics or instructions as to the correct organization for the society. The primary function of myth seems to be to codify, support and validate traditional beliefs and behavior although, as we will see, myths may also function as a guide to action and on occasion serve to promote and justify social

revolution.

The interpretations of myth and their ritual performances may change, however, according to the times as Wallace has noted above in relation to symbols and as the following indicates.

> Much has been said and written about the martyrdom of Husain and still more will be said in the future. The remembrance of Karbala is like a live being which not only grows constantly but also displays new appearances. It moves with the times. In Iran and within Shi'a countries mourning for the Lord of Martyrs (Sayyid-ul Shuhada) has always been in the process of expansion and transformation depending on the condition of the times, the process of thinking and the situation of the Shi'a (Introduction to Goftar-i Ashura 1341/ 1963-64, p. 3).

If myths change over time as the above seems to indicate then it is clear that mythology offers, as one of its functions, a rationalization of the fundamental needs of a particular society whether these be economic, biological, political, social or sexual while ritual is the symbolic dramatization of these same needs. As Kluckhohn has stated "Ceremonies tend to portray a symbolic resolvement [sic] of the conflicts which external environment, historical experience and selective distribution of personality types have caused to be characteristic in the society" (1965:158). But myth does not reflect all aspects of the social structure. Rather, it is always selective. In the case of Shi'a myth and ritual the Husain drama is associated with conflict and conflict resolution. The historical conflict between Husain and Yazid was a political event in that it was concerned with the question of who should make and carry out decisions regarding public policy and the common good. It was a struggle for the power to command. In the mythologizing of the tragedy of Husain and the Imams and the reenactment of these events in ritual in Iran today, the political

dimension comes out very clearly. Indeed, the persistence of this ritual form over time is due to the reflective nature of that ritual vis-à-vis the contemporary society - whether it be Umayyad, Abbasid, Safavid, Qajar or Pahlavi. The form did not persist merely because it was "traditional" nor has it been reenacted yearly because one's ancestors performed it thus and so. The performance and ritual remembrace of the myth is the result of the desire to express certain sentiments associated with basic problems confronting man as Being and man as Iranian.

There are thus two frames of reference implied here. The first frame enables us to work on the level of the ultimate or philosophical meanings inherent in the symbolism of the Husain drama while the second frame of reference enables us to look at the dialectic between religious ideas and mundane concerns; between the structure of society and the mythical elaboration and ritual enactment of the tragedy of Husain.

The narrative presentation of the drama of Husain has transcendental significance in the Weberian sense of an ultimate concern and search for meaning in human life and an attempt to offer a theodicy for such a concern, while at the same time reflecting selected aspects of social reality. These levels of meaning, however, are not divorced from each other but are rather inseparably intertwined in the multivocality of the symbol of Husain in the narrative and ritual context as they are in Islam itself. I hope to show some aspects of the semantic and rhetorical process by which members of certain status groups at a ritual performance give form to their daily experiences by relating them to mythical events of cosmic significance while simultaneously acquiring a model for behavior and individual decision. The dynamic interplay between these levels in the ritual context creates, it will be shown, an aura of

truthfulness through a complex interaction of social setting, rhetoric, emotion and belief (both in the perceptual and cognitive senses, see Spiro 1967:72) which is further manipulated as an "ideological" stance by particular groups insofar as these "truthful" messages become commands to action.

This dynamic interplay between what can be called in simpler terms "ideology" and "activity" occurs constantly in the religious sphere under normal sociocultural conditions but seems to take on added significance under conditions of rapid sociocultural change. This is especially true under conditions where religion is seen, as it is in Islam, to pervade all aspects of social existence and is not compartmentalized into a separate "religious" sphere of activity. Since religion, in my definition, is concerned with the truth about power, then it can be expected that religious activities will change when the assumptions about the nature of power and hence the rules which govern its use and control, can no longer guarantee the truth of things. This means, in effect, that the internal consistency between ideology and activity, which is so basic to the total religious and social experience mentioned above, may no longer reflect each other and hence guarantee the truth of things. The ideology, therefore, increasingly comes under question and doubt.

## Religion and the Problem of Suffering

It is clear from a survey of the literature on religion that all societies have the problem of providing an outlet for the conflicts, antagonisms, anxieties and frustrations of daily living - in Weberian phraseology, one of the functions of religion is to help people cope with suffering. Marx's often quoted - and equally often misunderstood -

statement that religion is the "opium of the people" points to the same phenomena but with a much more social structural emphasis. That is, Marx understood that the existential situation of man gives rise to certain problems which must be alleviated in some manner and that religion is one resource system which attempts to provide succor and comfort to the needy. Parsons' view of the role of religion in society is similar to that of Marx and Weber - and of course, Malinowski. According to Parsons (1958:197-211) social life is never smooth and predictable. Men face the fact that the highest early rewards do not always go to those who most closely follow the codes of society; the just and the righteous may suffer and fail while "the ungodly" may prosper. The expectations of individuals - which are invested with a great deal of emotion - may never come to fruition. Actual experience does not bear out one's hopes; what one wishes is not accompanied by fact; what is considered utopian does not accord with actuality. Despite the best precautions accidents happen - drought, plague, pestilence, sudden death - each of these, and many more, are some of the "selective pressures" which may visit one individual, one family, one region as against others. While environment disasters are "part of the game" and to be expected to some degree individuals find it difficult to cope with the unexpected such as sudden and premature death. In Parsons' view, this is the prototype of suffering. Man - being man - is never content to accept the discrepencies between hope and actuality, he must ask "Why?" While the question is invariably phrased "Why should this happen to me?", individuals are aware of and pursue the more general problem of "Why should this happen to anyone?" Why do men suffer? Why is there evil in the world? These are basic religious problems. It should be clear that these problems not only threaten the integration of

the individual personality but may also be disruptive of the social order.

Culturally-constituted defence mechanisms, a theodicy in Weber's terms (1964:138 pps.), must be developed to deal with such problems. Geertz has noted that "as a religious problem, the problem of suffering is, paradoxically, not how to avoid suffering but how to suffer, how to make of physical pain, personal loss, worldly defeat or the helpless contemplation of others' agony something bearable, supportable - something, as we say, sufferable. The problem of suffering passes easily into the problem of evil, for if suffering is severe enough it usually, though not always, seems morally undeserved as well . . ." (1965:19). The problem of evil and suffering . . . "raise the uncomfortable suspicion that perhaps the world and hence man's life in the world, has no genuine order at all . . . And the religious response to this suspicion is in each case the same: the formulation, by means of symbols, of an image of such a genuine order of the world which will account for and even celebrate, the perceived ambiguities, puzzles and paradoxes in human experience" (op. cit. p. 21).

The religious or symbol system which is created to help people cope with suffering does this in two ways. First, by offering an explanation for suffering and secondly, by offering techniques by which suffering may be avoided or its burden diminished (Spiro 1967:2). While I wish to look at both dimensions of this problem in the present study we might, for the moment concentrate on the second point.

Again, Marx seems to have had seminal thoughts on this problem. He notes that "Religious suffering is at the same time an expression of real suffering and a protest against real suffering" (Bottomore, 1956:26, italics mine). In other words the religious complex is one available

system which contains resources - values, symbols, knowledge, material objects, ideas and organization - which can be manipulated by individual actors in response to their perception of the existential situation. Marx undoubtedly saw the very existence of religion as itself a "protest" against real suffering in that it acts to cover up or assuage anxieties and frustrations arising out of the structure of society. Nevertheless the dynamic element in Marx's thought is clearly evident in the above quote in that religion is not merely a system to which one may repair for succor and comfort but is also a system which can be created and dynamically utilized, manipulated and directed to achieve the amelioration of those perceived social evils. Talmon (1965), Wallace (1956), Worsley (1957) and recently Burridge (1969) have shown how revitalization movements (used here only as a generic term to cover many types of similar phenomena) are religious or ideological responses to a perceived state of social confusion and which attempt, thereby, to create a more satisfying culture. There is much evidence that Islam itself - and Iranian Shi'ism in particular - developed in response to an unsatisfactory sociocultural system (Wolf 1951; Thaiss 1965; Watt 1951a, 1951b and Mazzaoui 1966).

## Suffering and the Ethos of Shi'ism

In the form in which I present it here the following material is an analytic abstraction derived from the statements of informants and other, written, sources of the Shi'a collected during fieldwork. The material is a composite of information which means that probably no single informant could have formulated the material in as systematic and explicit a manner as I have done. Nevertheless the formulation of

doctrine permits us to outline the idealized conception of order and suffering in the Shi'a Muslim world view while at the same time allowing us to focus on the attributes of the moral community which emerges from such a conception. As Geertz comments, "religious patterns have a double aspect: they are frames of perception, symbolic screens through which experience is interpreted; and they are guides for action, blueprints for conduct" (1968:98). It will be seen how the idealized conception of suffering relates to the dynamic aspects of the drama of Husain and of the activities of the tradesmen of the bazaar.

While feast days in Shi'a Islam have religious importance by far the most important religious occasions are those associated with death and suffering. Indeed, Shi'a Islam is a religion of tragedy. Basic to the Shi'a world view is a sense of persecution - unjust persecution. Much as the underlying assumptions of Freudian psychoanalysis focus on certain negative attributes of the personality so the Shi'a are preconditioned to see the negative, the sad, the tragic. The Shi'a see themselves in a passive situation as people who are, and have been, acted upon. There is no doubt that historically, from the time of the Umayyads to the persecution by the Sunni Ottoman Turks of the Shi'a minority in eastern Anatolia, there is ample justification for such a view. It is also true that the tragedies of the House of 'Ali have given to Shi'a Islam a background of suffering and martyrdom that has shaped its whole theology.

> There is an element of tragedy which characterizes the Persian and which is seen fully in the ethos of Shi'ism . . . The tragic and sad element, which does not at all negate the aspect of joy in life, is always of a religious character and a basis for contemplation. . . . It is a tragedy based on the realization of the human condition as containing an apparent contradiction. Man is in desperate need to realize the divine and become aware of his own spiritual nature. Yet, this

> realization is made well-nigh impossible by the distance that separates him from the divine and his need to await divine assistance to accomplish this end (Nasr 1969:103).

## A Theodicy of Suffering

In order to set these statements in their proper perspective it is necessary to present here a brief discussion of the various conceptions or "functions" of suffering as found in the Koranic world view and that of my informants in the bazaar.[3]

Earlier I discussed suffering as a sociological "given." That is, since it is endemic to all social life it constantly poses "problems of meaning" which must be resolved by cultural means. In other words, following Weber (1964:138-150) a theodicy must be developed that attempts to reconcile how a benevolent, omnipotent and omniscient God can allow evil and suffering to exist. Given the existence of evil and suffering then the three attributes of God just mentioned involve a fundamental contradiction. Especially paradoxical is the occurrence of unjust suffering. If a God is indeed all-powerful and benevolent then He must surely be able to eliminate evil and suffering. But since evil and suffering obviously exist then we must suppose that God, being all-powerful intentionally permits suffering to exist in which case He cannot logically be benevolent or alternatively that being benevolent He does intend to eliminate suffering in which case He is impotent. God cannot be all-good and all-powerful at the same time. Some informants who responded to my questions about these problems avoided a direct confrontation with

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[3]The theoretical aspects of the following discussion of suffering, sin and salvation are based largely on Weber (1964), Obeyesekere (1968), Bowker (1969), Geertz (1966) and Izutsu (1966).

the paradox. One reply, for example was

> There is always a reason for whatever occurs. Sometimes we understand it and sometimes we don't. It is like going to a doctor and getting a prescription. If you accept the doctor is good you will accept whatever medicine he gives you even if you don't know what it is. Even if the medicine is bitter you will take it because you believe in your doctor.[4]

The problem of suffering is discussed in the Koran and dealt with in several ways. Suffering is first of all discussed as a very real phenomenon and not conceived of merely as a philosophical abstraction. Suffering is part of what it means to be alive. Man, especially in a desert environment such as that in which the Koran was revealed, is constantly threatened by physical hardships, drought, famine and death. Individuals are also exposed to death in various social manifestations. The tribe as an extended kin-group is frequently wrought with internal feuds and conflicts while the tribe itself is often threatened by external attack from other groups. Hence the treatment of suffering in the Koran is largely conditioned by the physical realities of life and the ways in which suffering most commonly occurred in Arabia at the time. But the discussion of suffering in the Koran necessarily goes beyond this.

The foremost assumption of Islam is la ilaha illa lah - there is no God but God. Despite the existence within the Koranic world view of all kinds of creatures who inhabit the invisible world[5] there can be no dualism

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[4]This reference to things which cannot be explained has justification, obviously, in Islam. Levy notes "the matter has to be considered as ta'abbudi, i.e., one which the pious must take as an article of faith without too close investigation of its intelligibility" (1962:120 fn. 3, further references are included).

[5]Such as archangels (Gabriel, Michael, etc.); ministering angels (Rizwan, Nakir and Munkar, etc.); fallen angels (Satan or Iblis, Harut and Marut); and finally all kinds of Jinn and other demons (see Jeffery 1958:104-105).

of power and omniscience in Islam. Satan is not a powerful being in his own right but is rather conceived of as a being who is very much within the control of God. Satan and his cohorts tempt man and provoke him to evil but always within the parameters set by God.

> No affliction befalls,
> except it be by the leave of God
> (Sura 64:11).

If God is indeed all-powerful, then suffering is purposeful. But what of God's compassion? Does not the introduction to every chapter of the Koran and the statement preceding every human action state, IN THE NAME OF GOD THE MERCIFUL, THE COMPASSIONATE? How can suffering be understood as purposeful, as fulfilling the desires of God under such circumstances? Essentially, the Koran answers this by providing several instrumental explanations of suffering.

Instrumental Functions of Suffering

The first of these is that suffering is punishment for sin. Most often, examples are taken from the past to exemplify God's wrath and punishment for the sins of man. Note the following:

> We have sent no Prophet to any city but that We seized its people with misery and hardship that haply they might be humble; then We gave them in the place of evil, good till they multiplied, and said, 'Hardship and happiness visited our fathers.' So We seized them suddenly, unawares. Yet had the peoples of the cities believed and been Godfearing, We would have opened upon them blessings from heaven and earth; but they cried lies, and so We seized them for what they earned (Sura 7:92-94).

The Koran furnishes further evidence for the punishment of sin. One notable incident is the battle of Badr. This battle was a conflict between the forces of Muhammad and a much larger force of Meccans who were

sent to defend a caravan. The Muslims under Muhammad attacked and in all ordinary circumstances they should have been routed but in fact, they won a notable victory. Inevitably, this was taken as a sign of God's approval and his support for the faithful.

> There has already been a sign for you in the companies that encountered. One company fighting in the way of God and another unbelieving; these saw with their own eyes twice their number, but God strengthens with His help whom He will. Surely in that is a warning for those who open their eyes (Sura 3:11).

Informants in the bazaar also accounted for events in terms of a punishment or divine retribution for wrong behavior. Allow me to list a few examples from my fieldnotes.

> Abbas Agha was talking with a fellow tradesman, Haji Rahim, and trying to convince him to allow his son to study at a foreign university. The son had told his father he needed about 20,000 tomans to study abroad but Haji Rahim refused saying he feared his son would lose his religiosity. Sometime later Abbas Agha found out that someone had swindled Haji Rahim out of exactly this amount. When asked later if it wouldn't have been better to give his son the money, Haji Rahim said no, he would rather lose it this way than have his son lose his religion.

In relating this incident to me, Abbas Agha emphasized God's retribution. He felt God was punishing this man because of his misdirected behavior. Both men are intensely religious but have differential interpretations of the value of education. Abbas Agha felt that Haji Rahim was mistaken and he told me:

> There is a hadith [tradition] from the Prophet that says it is necessary (vajeb) to search for knowledge for all Muslim men and women (talab-ul elm farizaho ela kol-i Muslima va Moslem). In another hadith it says 'search for knowledge even if you have to go to China'. In those days the distance between Arab countries and China was great but even if you had to go that far to learn to read and write, you should go. It has never been said by the Prophet or written in the Koran what type of knowledge you have to study.

> It doesn't say you have to make a jet or you have to learn to read and write only. They say knowledge in general. But some of our previous leaders didn't want us to learn. The foreigners had their hand in it. They didn't want us to learn anything, but thank God it has changed now. The young generation as well as young akhunds have a different way of thinking from the old generation.

Another incident in my fieldnotes concerns someone who was cheated out of an inheritance.

> Muhammad told me today that his mother's brother cheated his mother out of her inheritance. It seems that after the death of their father the MoBr. told her to give her share of the inheritance to him so he could look after it, and, if possible, increase it through investments. Although she was married at the time, she gave her inheritance to her brother for investment and safe-keeping rather than to her husband. Iranian women generally keep their personal wealth separate from that of their husbands, usually as security in the event of divorce. Muhammad's father was upset about this but there was little he could do. In any event Muhammad's MoBr prospered and became quite wealthy while Muhammad's father, through poor business dealings, fell on hard times. Muhammad's family needed whatever money they could get and his mother asked her brother for the return of her inheritance plus whatever increments had accrued. He refused to give it to her, making first one excuse and then another. The family needed the money quite badly and she insited on her right but to no avail. [Nothing was related to me about the possibility of seeking legal redress of their grievances.] Not long after that four or five children of Muhammad's MoBr were killed in an automobile accident at a railroad crossing. Some time later, the wife of the MoBr gave birth to a deformed child. Muhammad cited these unfortunate events as evidence of God's punishment for his uncle's contravention of Islamic law.
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> In still another incident Hasan Shirazi was in the process of declaring bankruptcy. In order to preserve something for himself he asked a very close friend, Abbas, whom he had known since childhood and who was a colleague in the bazaar, if he would take over formal ownership of his house and after the bankruptcy proceedings were completed, to return the house to him. Abbas readily agreed to this, but after the proceedings were concluded Abbas refused to return the title to the house and instead charged Hasan rent which he backed up through the offices

> of a notary public. No money had originally been transferred, the title merely being made over into Abbas's name through the same notary public who was now backing up Abbas's claim to rent. The house was now legally Abbas's and there was nothing Hasan could do. He could not go to the authorities since he told them he owned nothing at the time of the bankruptcy hearings. There was nothing he could do but meditate on the meaning of friendship. Quite a number of years later as Abbas's fortunes increased and those of Hasan diminished Abbas's son was killed in a plane crash while returning from his studies in Europe. This event was interpreted by Hasan Shirazi, my informant, as God's punishment for Abbas's misdeeds years earlier.

While the battle of Badr vindicated, for the Muslims, their trust in God; the battle of Uhud, which occurred a year later, called that faith into question. On this occasion the Meccans returned with an even larger force and defeated the Muslims at Uhud (the Shi'a believe, incidentally, that 'Ali saved Muhammad's life on this occasion as the narration presented on page 316 indicates. The Koranic explanation for this defeat is - Islam itself, i.e., unquestioning submission to the will of God, similar to the view of the informant quoted earlier who stated that there is always a reason for whatever occurs but if you have faith you accept it without question.

> No part of the matter is yours, whether He turns toward them, or whether He punishes them, for truly they do dark deeds. To God belongs everything in the heavens and in the earth: He forgives whom He wills, He punishes whom He wills, and God is forgiving, compassionate (Sura 3:123).

The conclusion to be drawn here is that not all suffering is a consequence of evil and the breaking of God's laws. The battle of Uhud raised the question of innocent or undeserved suffering. Not all suffering is a consequence of sin. The Koran therefore produces a second explanation for suffering - that is, as a test or trial.

> Surely we will test you with something of fear, and of hunger, and a loss of wealth and lives and produce; yet give good tidings to the patient, who, when calamity afflicts them, say "We belong to God, and to Him are we returning" (Sura 2:150)

but yet:

> Every soul tastes of death, and we test you with evil and with good as a trial, and to us you will return (Sura 21:36, italics mine).

The phrase in italics is interesting and quite important for it indicates that prosperity and wealth are as much a test as is poverty and calamity. What is important is how man behaves as custodian of God's beneficence. As an informant phrased it:

> If someone gets money from his own work and then he spends this money for the health and welfare of other people, God will help him to have more and more everyday. He won't know where he is getting the money from. Most of the people who have excessive wealth, God has given it to them - it is not because of their abilities. It is true that one's activities and his knowledge are very effective, but you should know that God's blessings (barakat) are very important. If your aim and wish are pure (pak) and you don't use your knowledge in the wrong way, God will bestow his blessings on you and expand your fortune.
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> Some people who get interest are very rich and they think this money will last for them, but it won't. If it [i.e., retribution] doesn't come to them, then it will come to their children. It will make them beggars. They will have very dangerous and bad days in the future or they will get some kind of sickness which no one can cure. No one can fight with God.

Prosperity then, is one test which is designed to determine if man is indeed a believer. If he is, he will spend his wealth for the community of believers and thereby reap even greater rewards in this life and the next. If he misuses his wealth or follows the wrong path in accumulating wealth then he is subject to God's wrath. Thus, suffering (here defined as the anxieties aroused by choice) is a necessary part of God's will:

it helps to create in man a humble submissiveness to God's will on the one hand and on the other it helps to distinguish the sincere from the insincere. Under pressure a man will reveal what he is really worth. Suffering not only forms a man's character and makes him strong under pressure, but it also exposes a man's true nature.

> If We give a man a taste of mercy from Us, and then remove it from him, at once he is despairing and rebellious; and if we give him a taste of favors after misfortune has touched him, he is sure to say, "Evil has left me". Truly, he is exultant, boastful - not to those who are patient and who do good deeds: those are the ones for whom there is forgiveness and a great reward (Sura 11:12-14).

To summarize, then, suffering is viewed, on the one hand, as punishment for sin while on the other hand it is instrumental in testing man's faith.

Man's Adaptive Response to Suffering

While these are the explanations offered to believers to justify evil and suffering in a world ruled by a just, compassionate and all-powerful being, the question still arises - what is man's response? What can be done to alleviate suffering and to lessen its burden on men?

There are several answers to this question. First, it is clearly recognized by all believing Muslims that God is at the center of the universe and man must submit to His will. That is, man must be patient and accept, unquestioningly, the trials and tribulations that face him. This is the way an informant phrased this idea:

> As we see in this world everybody is working and some get good results and improve their position while others not. The one who obeys God and the one who commits sin - both are alive and pass through this life. Many times we see good people have a good life and sometimes good people have a bad and difficult life. Or we see bad

> people have a good life or they may have a bad life - there is no superiority in this life. But there is another place for taking care of man's good deeds and bad behavior. Our account book will go to the just table of God and it will be taken care of in God's court. . . . If I don't get a recompense for my actions in this world, there is another world whose ruler is God.

The idea presented by this informant is patience. Patience, as the expression goes, is its own reward. Ultimately, the evildoers do not prosper, although it may look like it in this world. Geertz speaks to the same issue when he quotes that profound quatrain:

> The rain falls on the just
> And on the unjust fella;
> But mainly on the just,
> Because the unjust has the just's umbrella
> (1965:211)

Some writers, especially those in the tradition of nineteenth century German thought, have severely criticized such passive and renunciatory ideas. Nietzsche, for one, has provided a very interesting and insightful analysis of ideas common to many salvation religions.

> Now I can make out what they seem to have been saying all along: "We, the good ones, are also the just ones." They call the thing they seek not retribution but the triumph of justice; the thing they hate is not their enemy, by no means - they hate injustice, ungodliness; the thing they hope for and believe in is not vengeance, the sweet exultation of vengeance ('sweeter than honey' as Homer said) but the 'triumph of God, who is just, over the godless'; . . .
>
> "And what do they call that which comforts them in all their sufferings - their phantasmagoria of future bliss?"
>
> "Do I hear correctly? They call it Judgement Day, the coming of <u>their</u> kingdom, the 'Kingdom of God'. Meanwhile they live in 'faith', in 'love', in 'hope'."
>
> "Stop! I've heard enough."
>
> Faith in what? Love for what? Hope for what? There can be no doubt that these weaklings, too, want a chance

> to be strong, to have <u>their</u> kingdom come. They call it simply the Kingdom of God - what admirable humility (1956:182).

Despite the criticisms often leveled at Nietzsche he was very much aware of some of the sociological and psychological functions of religion, especially salvation religions and in this context he is very similar to Marx who opposed salvation religions for being a type of psychological control over an oppressive environment. The Islamic perspective as seen in the foregoing quotes from the Koran and from informants seems to be pretty much in the same tradition. That is, the Islamic view recognizes that injustices arise because of social abuses and problems that develop in the existential situation of man. Islam, as a religion, attempts to cope with these problems, at least at one level, by placing suffering firmly in its place. Whatever suffering and hardships may befall one, they are miniscule in comparison to the great rewards to be reaped in paradise at some future time and since, in any event, everything is completely in the hands of God, there is no point in being overly concerned about it. Such an interpretation would seem to lead to the often discussed and supposed "fatalistic" attitudes of Islam but this would be a misleading interpretation of that faith. Only when everything else has failed does a Muslim, and especially a Persian, resign himself to fate. This is especially true of conditions and situations beyond man's control. At certain times man realizes his human failings and at these crucial moments resigns himself to those powers greater than himself. But meanwhile, an individual makes every effort to utilize favorable opportunities and if necessary, to manipulate people, spiritual beings and situations to alleviate his difficulties.

One technique, which is perfectly acceptable - and expected - is for man to appeal to God either directly or through one of the Imams or other saintly figures in Shi'a Islam to answer his prayer and remove his distress (see page 167 for a discussion of the instrumental functions of prayer). The Koran demonstrates man's weakness when, in times of distress, he is unable to find help from any other source and throws himself at God's mercy and seeks help.

The idea of divine intercession leads, of course, to the role of saints in Islam (see von Grunebaum 1951:67-84). Within Shi'a Islam the role of the intermediary is institutionalized. Even after the revelation of the Koran to Muhammad, the Shi'a believe the role of the intermediary must continue. Muhammad is indeed the seal of the Prophets after whom there will be no other legislative prophecy. There can be no new shari'at. But there are "friends of God" (awliya), chief of whom among the Shi'a are the twelve Imams who act as guides into the hidden meaning of the divine revelations. Individuals of great piety and learning, particularly members of the ulama, are said to be in constant contact with the hidden twelfth Imam and act as Mujtahids who are able to provide interpretations of the law in the name of the twelfth Imam. Every believing Shi'a "must follow a living Mujtahid whose duty it is to apply and interpret the Law from generation to generation" (Nasr 1966:105). The last of the twelve Imams, Muhammad al-Mahdi, is a savior figure who will return to redeem the world from its state of corruption. The expectation of the Mahdi is itself a religious virtue. The idea of appealing to saints and the Imams; and the patient awaiting of one who will, in the future, abolish injustice and corruption and therefore end the hardships of present day life, are

constant elements of the religious outlook of the tradesmen of the bazaar. The expectation of a future revolution means, of course, that the eschatological process becomes a political and social transformation of this world.

At one level of analysis then, man seeks salvation from suffering through eschatological processes. But at another level, Muslim society is so organized that the alleviation of much socially-induced hardships and suffering is institutionalized. Most well-known here perhaps, are the laws governing marriage and divorce, inheritance and the prohibition of usury. In more general terms Islam encourages an attack on poverty with alms-giving which is one of the "five pillars" of the faith and the redistribution of the wealth of the community for the benefit of all members of the community. The shari'at, or Muslim law, also provides for the appointment of a government officer (Muhtasib) whose duty, in part, was to supervise the activities of the bazaar.[6] He saw to it that correct weights and measures were used, that goods were produced at a good quality and sold at a fair price. The non-payment of debts and excessive interest were also his concern. Besides these commercial functions the Muhtasib was concerned with the moral and civic propriety of the population. He could insist on proper street cleaning, regular attendance at the mosque, abstinence from wine and other alcoholic beverages and the strict observance of the Ramezan fast - in fact, he dealt with the common daily contraventions of Islamic law and was guided by the Islamic injunction to

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[6]This role no longer exists, its functions having been taken over by the municipality through such offices as that of consumer protection.

"enjoin the good and prohibit the bad" (see Lambton 1954). The conclusion to be drawn from this discussion is that positive action in society to alleviate perceived suffering and injustice is an inherent part of the Islamic and Shi'a world view. Both the rather passive acceptance of certain types of suffering as being the will of God and the active response to social injustices are intertwined and form part of what it means to be a Muslim.

In some cases, according to informants, God appoints some men to be a test. This test imposes great burdens on the individual - burdens of fortitude and piety in the face of grave difficulties. While Ayoub was often mentioned by informants as a person who suffered greatly yet was relieved of his distress by God, by far most references to a symbol of suffering was Husain. Note the following verses from a popular drama of Husain:

> Gabriel announces the Lord's decision: He who has seen the most trials, endured most afflictions and has been most patient in his sufferings, he shall win the privilege of intercession.
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> He addresses the Prophet: Take this key of intercession from me, and give it to him who has undergone the greatest trials.
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> Gabriel reappears and, taking the verdict out of the Prophet's hands, delivers to him this message from the Lord: None has suffered the pain and afflictions which Husain has undergone. None has, like him, been obedient in My service. As he has taken no steps save in sincerity in all that he has done, thou must put the key of Paradise in his hand. The privilege of making intercession is exclusively his. Husain is, by My peculiar grace, the mediator for all.
>
> The Prophet, handing over the key: Go thou and deliver from the flames everyone who has in his life-time shed but a single tear for thee, everyone who has in anyway helped thee, everyone who has performed a pilgrimage to thy shrine, or mourned for thee, and everyone who has

> written tragic verse for thee. Bear each and all with thee to Paradise.
>
> Husain: Oh my friends, be ye relieved from grief, and come along with me to the mansions of the blest. Sorrow has past [sic] away, it is now time for joy and rest; trouble has gone by, it is the hour to be at ease and tranquility.
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> The Sinners (entering Paradise): God be praised! By Husain's grace we are made happy, and by his favor we are delivered from destruction. By Husain's loving-kindness is our path decked with roses and flowers. We are thorns and thistles, but are now made cedars owing to his merciful intercession (von Grunebaum 1951: 93-94 following Sir Lewis Pelley 1879, vol. II 100-101; 335-348).

While Husain endured great hardship and suffering in the service of God and became the symbol of intercession, nevertheless he went down fighting. He did not passively accept injustice but fought for what he believed was right. Husain willingly accepted to undergo hardship and death - he willingly accepted his fate and in the end was given not only salvation but also became the keeper of the keys of the Kingdom. Through Husain's intercession is redemption. While Husain accepted suffering for himself he did so in the process of trying to relieve suffering for others in the form of injustice, cruelty and oppression. In the Shi'a conception, he died to preserve the true faith and thereby save others from suffering and hardship.

## Suffering as a Consequence of Human Action

Among the Shi'a, as among the Sunni, suffering is understood as an inherent part of life and is experienced as some form of misery, pain or distress - either mentally or physically. Suffering may be the consequence of an act of God such as drought, famine or a flood, but it may also arise because of the actions of other people. The Shi'a place

great primacy on individual freedom of choice and, inevitably, some people choose the wrong way and in doing so create difficulties for other people.[7]

God sends down various signs to man, including his revelation. Man understands the meaning of these various signs and interprets them either as examples of divine goodness, love, justice, mercy, etc., or as examples of the divine wrath, as punishment or vengeance. These latter are warning signs. In both cases, however, the response of men can be either to accept these signs - both positive and negative - or to reject them. If man accepts them he exhibits both gratitude and thankfulness as well as fear of God, his punishments and the Day of Judgement. Acceptance leads to belief (Iman) while rejection leads to disbelief (Kufr). This distinction between belief and disbelief is a fundamental dichotomy in the Koranic and Shi'a world view and leads, as we shall see, to an understanding of the bazaari opposition to modernization and change.

In other words, man is created with the freedom to choose which path he will take. Allow me to quote an informant.

> Although God provides guides for people, nevertheless man is free to choose his own way. He has created heaven as well as hell [and has told man] if you want to have an environment like heaven you must follow certain orders and if you want an environment like hell you should choose a different way. Man has two characteristics (a'mal). One is instinctual (a'mal-i badani) and the second is choice (ekhtiari). You can become a learned man or not; you can go to a doctor

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[7]The question of "free will" arises here and might best be referred to by one of the greatest Shi'a authorities, Ibn Babawayhi (d. 991 A.D.): "Says the Shaykh Abu Ja'far: Our belief concerning human actions is that they are created (makhluqa) in the sense that Allah possesses foreknowledge (khalq taqdir), and not in the sense that Allah compels mankind to act in a particular manner by creating a certain disposition (khalq takwin). And the meaning of all this is that Allah has never ceased to be aware of the potentialities (maqadir) of human beings" (Fyzee 1942:31-32).

> when you are sick or not go. This is up to you. God has guided all human beings. He has sent the Prophet for everybody and has taught good and bad and the right way and the wrong way to everyone. It is just like the signs in the road that say Qom [St. Louis] and Saveh [Chicago]. If you want to go to Qom you will take that way, and if you want to go to Saveh you will take another road.
>
> Those people who are interested in good behavior will follow it and you will think it is good. For example, if you like to study and you see someone else is studying, you will like it and say how good it is that he is studying and becoming a learned man. But if someone distracts that person and doesn't let him study you will get upset and ask why doesn't that person let him take advantage of his right.

Thus, man is free to choose whether he will follow God's path or not. But the behavior of those who choose not to follow God's path may have consequences not only for their future life but also for those believers who do wish to follow God's way but are prevented from doing so. In the Shi'a world view each of the twelve Imams was persecuted and eventually martyred by religio-political opponents.[8] Each was following God's path of purity, goodness and concern for the Muslim community and each was

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[8]It might be noted here that in conformity with the sense of persecution and oppression which are fundamental characteristics of the Shi'a world view leading Shi'a theologians to believe that Muhammad himself was murdered. "Our belief concerning the Prophet is that he was poisoned during the expedition of Khaybar. The poison continued to be noxious to him until it cut his aorta and then he died from its effects" (Ibn Babawayhi, Fyzee edition 1942:101). The usually accepted Sunni view is that the Prophet died of fever at Medina. It is interesting to note that the expedition of Khaybar was against the Jews and Williams (1963:215) specifically notes that Muhammad was poisoned by the Jews (again quoting Ibn Babawayhi). At a rozeh in the bazaar commemorating the death day (ruz-i vafat) of Muhammad a narrator made the following statements. "The Jews killed Muhammad," "The Jews wanted to kill Muhammad's father," "The Jews wanted to kill Imam Husain but one Nasara prevented it," "It is written very clearly in the Koran that the Jews are the worst enemies of Islam."

prevented from continuing in this direction and teaching the "good news" (tabshir) by individuals who, according to the Shi'a, are kāfar (disbelievers - even though they were Muslims) and who turn men away from the Straight Path.

Nowhere in the theology of Shi'a Islam is this element of the conflict between good and evil - between those fighting in the way of God and those trying to prevent God's word from becoming action more explicit than in the drama of Husain. "Here, more than anywhere in Sunni Islam, the Shi'a Muslim comes to grips with the mystery of suffering and grapples with areas of meaning the average Sunni ignores" (Cragg 1956:132). It is also in the symbolism of this drama that the bazaar tradesman is able to generalize his personal concerns, especially as they result from the process of modernization and social change, so that he may use the drama as a model. Thus, he is not alone; his troubles and fears are assuaged by being shared, his choices laid out for him with the highest sanction.

## The Martyrdom of Imam Husain

The following is my own, somewhat literal, translation and composite account of the tragedy at Karbala as found in Persian elementary school readers for the fifth and sixth classes.

> Imam Husain, who is also called Sayyid-al Shyhada [Lord of Martyrs], is the esteemed son of Amir-al mo'menīn [qli] and brother of Imam Hassan.[9]

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[9]It is ironic, and also significant, that the readers on religion which are prepared for general use in the public school system of Iran should imply the illegitimacy of the present regime and the need for resistance to such a government. The Ministry of Education employs members of the ulama who are largely responsible for writing material on religion for the government schools. Since the statements made are historical facts, only a multivocal interpretation would give them a meaning other than the

> Imam Husain, when his brother was martyred, became Imam. Mo'āvieh had previously made an agreement with Imam Husain that he [Mo'āvieh] would not choose anyone to become caliph after himself. But, despite his promises he desired that his son Yazid succeed him as leader of the Muslims. To achieve this purpose he used to spend large sums of money and he destroyed anyone who was against this plan.
>
> Yazid, who introduced himself as the successor of the Prophet after Mo'āvieh was a profligate pleasure-seeker and wine-drinker who was disrespectful to religious laws. Imam Husain felt that if he keeps quiet and lets Yazid do whatever he wants to do, the laws of Islam may disappear and all the tribulations of the Prophet and past Imams would be ineffective. So he refused to accept Yazid as caliph.
>
> Meanwhile the people of Kufa who were not satisfied with the caliphate of Yazid wrote many letters to Husain and asked him to come to Iraq. They promised him all kinds of help and cooperation. Imam Husain found himself in a situation where he realized on the one hand that Yazid and his followers were planning to kill him and on the other than the people of Kufa had invited him to go there and with their help, to resist Yazid.

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literal. On the basis of interviews with young people going to school (essentially sons and daughters of edari) they do not seem to be aware of the multivocality of the symbols presented in the readers. The children of the bazaar tradesmen were aware, however, of these meanings. It is interesting to quote McClelland (1963:168) here:

> Educational authorities everywhere seem concerned to make sure that children read what is considered normal, right, and proper. Although many different kinds of stories may be written in a country . . . only those are chosen for public school textbooks that are considered representative of the way people usually think in that country.

McClelland qualifies this somewhat later on (p. 170) where he notes that subcultures may differ in their value orientations in important particulars and may therefore provide their own interpretations of stories.

> So, during the period of the Haj, when large numbers of people were coming from different cities to Mecca, he gave a speech and informed the people that he is not going to perform the Haj that year in order to fulfill his duty and go to Kufa. Yazid, on his part, sent an army from Damascus to Kufa.
>
> Imam Husain, with his brothers, children, wives and friends and a small number of people of Kufa fought, in the desert of Karbala, thousands of soldiers who were either ignorant or in the hope of acquiring wealth and position. On the Tenth of Muharram, which we call 'āshura, in the year 61 [680 A.D.] Imam Husain suffered an honorable martyrdom. The enemy captured the women and smaller children and took them to Kufa and Damascus by the order of Yazid.
>
> Imam Husain did not accept oppression (satamgarān) and injustice (zolm) and he didn't pay attention to those who wanted him to accept Yazid or keep quiet. Sayyid-al-shyhadā with this brave insurrection (qiyām-i-mardāneh) gave a new spirit to Muslims. His martyrdom at Karbala served as an example of resistance against tyranny (satamgaran). Imam Husain often said, "I see life under a tyrannic government (hokumat-i-satamgaran) to be tiring (khasteh konandeh) and unacceptable (narvā) and I consider it happiness and pleasure to leave this world." At the battlefield also, when he had lost all his friends and he alone was facing all of the enemy, he often said, "we will never accept the shame of colluding with tyrants."
>
> All Muslims have a special attachment to this Imam. For this reason in the month of Muharram, which is the month of his martyrdom, many gatherings will be organized for the purpose of the remembrance of that Imam's self-sacrifice (fedākāri), and in those gatherings the story of the self-sacrifice of Imam Husain and his friends will be told [in order] to protect the bases of Islam. The story will also be told of that great one's devotion and resistance to those who were ruling over people and who were not suitable for that position (Ta'alimat-i dini . . .).

Muharram

Muharram is the first month of the Muslim calendar and it is the month in which Husain was martyred and therefore the holiest month in the Shi'a calendar. The first ten days are of greatest significance since it

is believed that Husain arrived at the plain of Karbala around the first of the month and on the tenth was martyred. Each of the ten days has significance in the ritual dramatizations that occur. For example, the seventh recounts the marriage of Husain's daughter Fatima with her FaBrSo Qasim after which the bridegroom is almost immediately killed by the enemy. The eighth is the story of the martyrdom of Husain's son 'Ali Akbar while the ninth recounts the martyrdom of hazrat-i 'Abbas, Husain's half-brother. The ninth (known as tasu'a) is also important in that it was the day preceding Husain's death and a day in which it is believed Husain was engaged in prayer and meditation on his impending doom. It is interesting to note that the month of Muharram had had sacred significance in pre-Islamic Arabia and the tenth of Muharram ('Ashura) had long been a day of fasting among the Jews of Arabia. Muhammad adopted this Jewish practice but after his relations with the Jews became strained he adopted the month of Ramezan as the fasting period and left the fast on 'Ashura as an optional practice for believers. Wensinck notes that some believers, presumably for the sake of distinguishing themselves from the Jews, adopted the ninth of Muharram in place of the tenth or along with it as a fast day with the name tasu'a (1960:705). Thus, both tasu'a, the ninth, and 'Ashura, the tenth, have religious significance even before the advent of the Shi'a and Husain. The same is the case with the month of Muharram itself.

Some orientalists, in the true tradition of Sir James Frazer, see the origins of the Husain ritual in the ancient agricultural and fertility rites of Adonis-Tammuz. Note the following:

> . . . this ritual [speaking of the mourning processions for Husain], which is without parallel in Islam where a saint is never commemorated by a re-enactment of his

> funeral, incorporates rites of an earlier cult. A number of details regarding the arrangement and the symbolism of the procession corroborates the general parallelism of the ceremony with the festival of Adonis-Tammuz. The violent death of the God on the approach of summer, symbolizing the decline of nature's productive force under the searing rays of a merciless sun, was followed by a mourning of seven days after which the body was washed, anointed and shrouded to be carried abroad in a procession and finally interred (von Grunebaum 1951:88-89).

Another orientalist, Ph. Marcais, speaking of North Africa, writes:

> It is generally agreed that the complex custom of 'Ashura in the Maghreb reflect the survival of very ancient agrarian rites, in fact the celebration of the death of the year coming to its end and the birth of their popular aspects [sic] which are both sad and joyful. The traditional Muslim Shi'ite mourning has, in all likelihood, become grafted on to this magico-religious substratum, whilst the lunar calendar has taken over a solar year cult, subjecting it to a temporal displacement. Through these superimpositions remains of this ancient disrupted ceremonial have, here and there, become haphazardly attached to Muslim feasts (1960:705).

Mamnoun, on the other hand, sees the origin of the Husain mourning processions in the pre-Islamic history of Iran. He notes that the inhabitants of Bukhara, three hundred years before Christ, commemorated the death of Siyavush with a funeral procession. In the funeral procession, some of the men carried a bier on their shoulders containing the simulated body of Prince Siyavush[10] while others in the procession

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[10]Unvala notes that a dummy of Husain without the head was carried on a bier on the shoulders of four men in the Muharram ceremonies in the early 1920's. "In some processions it is not the dummy that is carried on the bier, but a living man of flesh and blood. His head is so ingeniously concealed from view by a thin partition of cloth, and the effect of the blood-besmeared neck is so nicely produced by inserting in a dummy torso bones covered with real blood. This torso is placed over his body and the whole is covered up with a winding sheet. Only the wounded arms and feet of the man are exposed to view, from which blood oozes out. The man, who is lying on his back, raises his head from time to time and produces thereby a weird effect. The spectators cannot but think that they have before them a decapitated man, whose body is still warm (1927:91).

wept and beat themselves (Mamnoun 1967:17-19). Rypka substantiates the mourning for Siyavoush and notes that the various verse meters and style characteristics of the classic Persian epic Shahnáma were based on "popular heroic songs, particularly the dirges on Siyavush . . . for these used to be sung in Bukhara by folk singers with musical accompaniment . . ." (1968:154). The particular chantric or musical mode of the Shahnama particularly as sung by gymnasts in the zurkhaneh is known as the charhargah mode which is also the mode (common to the ta'azieh traditional religious theater) and rowzeh (religious songs sung in praise of Shi'a saints) (Ali Khan 1972:17). Given the similarities between the funeral procession and ritual of mourning for Siyavoush and that for Husain during Muharram and given the commonality of the musical mode used in both ceremonies, there is indeed a strong possibility that the ancient Persian rituals marking the death of Siyavoush may have been adopted by the Persian Shi'a in their commemoration of the death of Husain. There is little evidence, on the other hand, that the Husain rituals are based on the more distant (geographically and culturally) rituals associated with Adonis-Tammuz. This latter view is based solely on the speculations of a German author whose work was written in 1894 at the height of Sir James Frazer's popularity (Eedermans 1894).

## History of the Rozeh Gatherings

The origins of the narration ceremonies is quite different from that of mourning for Husain, per se, which has had a longer history. While it is known that mourning ceremonies were held in honor of Husain as early as the ninth and tenth centuries A.D. (see Mamnoun 1967:12-13), they appear not to have developed into rituals of narration (Rozeh) until the

sixteenth century. At this time two Persian poets, who lived during the early years of the Safavid dynasty, wrote works which were largely devoted to the martyrology of Imam Husain. The most famous of these is perhaps Kamāl-ed Din Husain vā'ez Kāshifi (died 1505) who wrote the work Rozatu'sh Shuhada (Garden of Martyrs). Another work of importance is the Haft-Band of Muhtasham of Kāshān (died 1588) (see Rypka 1968:313 and also Browne 1959, IV:172). Informants were somewhat aware of the historical origins of the Husain narrations:

> In the old days there was a book by the name of Rozeh and they used to read this book in ceremonies and [hence] they called this [i.e., religious gatherings] rozehkhani. Little by little preachers developed who started talking about Imams and prophets. Then some other people started to talk about Karbala and 'Ashura and all the killings and misery on 'Ashura and they wrote a lot of books about this and rozeh khani became popular - they way it is now. This started from the Safavid times [1501-1736] and people are used to rozeh khani and consider it barakat [having religious blessings].

Another informant was somewhat more explicit about the functions of the rozeh gatherings:

Informant: This was going on until the time when the rozehs of the senfs came into being [rozehkhaniyi senfi dorost shod]. The rozeh khani was started by the tailors. They used to go to different houses each week for a rozeh and at the same time they would discuss their work with each other.

Question: When did they start rozehkhani?

Informant: Since Shah 'Abbas' time [1581-1629] or maybe before they had rozeh khani, but it was rozeh khani-yi mahalleh [those associated with the quarters of the city] but not for the senf. I think that during the Constitutional period [1895-1911] they wanted to make people used to the revolution (mardomra mashruteh ādat bedahad). The secret societies (dastha-yi namar'i) started the rozeh khani-yi senfi. It started from the tailors. All the workers got together and put up a flag and they said they have a rozeh and got together. It was held weekly. Later, other senfs followed this idea like cloth merchants and others.

Question: Why did they start this?

Informant: They would go for religious reasons but they had another motive, that is, to make the people understand. Perhaps it was planned or unplanned (dānesteh ya nadānesteh). They would get together and talk about the government situation. The mourning ceremonies of the "guilds" were political.

Informants generally seemed to be aware that the narration of the drama of Husain had political purposes not only vis-à-vis the Iranian government during the Constitutional period but also during the Safavid period. One informant noted that the importance of Husain was developed by the Safavids because of their opposition to the Sunni Ottoman Turks. Since Husain was martyred by Sunni Muslims, all Sunnis are seen as the enemies of the Shi'a. When such a view is coupled with antagonisms between two political rivals it is inevitable that the symbol of Husain will be exploited. Opposition to the Ottoman Turks created a need for a unifying symbol, one which represented purity and piety on the one hand and a warrior spirit on the other - it needed the symbol of someone who was willing to stand up for the faith and die for it if need be. The historical and mythical figure of Husain was such a symbol.

The rozeh khans, or narrators, base their narrations on the above mentioned books and similar works such as the tufan-ul Buka (Deluge of Weeping) or the 'Asrāru-sh shahādat (Mysteries of Martyrdom). Each rozeh khan uses one of these or others as a base and expands upon the theme. He retells each story from memory based on his own transcription of the original with additional stylistic embellishments and improvisations. His skill as a narrator depends largely on his rhetorical skills and his ability to work the audience into a frezy of weeping and lamentation for the martyrs as we shall see in another section. To set the stage for the

following discussion it might be useful to quote a portion of Muhtasham's celebrated Haft Band.

When they summoned mankind to the table of sorrow, they first issued the summons to the hierarchy of the Prophets.
When it came to the turn of the Saints, Heaven trembled at the blow which they smote on the head of the Lion of God [i.e., 'Ali].
Then they kindled a fire from sparks of diamond-dust and cast it on Hasan, the Chosen one
Then they tore up from Madina and pitched at Karbala those pavilions to which even the angels were denied entrance.
Many tall palm-trees from the grove of the 'Family of the Cloak'[11] did the people of Kufa fell in that plain with the axe of malice.
Many a blow whereby the heart of Mustafa [Muhammad] was rent did they inflict on the thirsty throat of Murtaza, 'Ali's successor [i.e., Husain].
While his women, with collars torn and hair unloosed, raised their laments to the Sanctuary of the Divine Majesty,
And the Trusted Spirit [Gabriel] laid his head in shame on his knees, and the eye of the sun was darkened at the sight.
When the blood of his thirsty throat fell on the ground, turmoil arose from the earth to the summit of God's high Throne.
The Temple of Faith came nigh to ruin through the many fractures inflicted on the Pillars of Religion.
They cast to the ground his tall palm-tree, even as the thorn-bush; a deluge arose from the dust of the earth to heaven.
The breeze carried that dust to the Prophet's tomb; dust arose from Medina to the seventh heaven.
When tidings of this reached Jesus dwelling in the heavenly sphere, he forthwith plunged his garments in indigo in the vat of heaven.
Heaven was filled with murmuring when the turn to cry out passed from the Prophets to the presence of the Trusted Spirit.
Mistaken imagination fancied that this dust [i.e., sorrow and vexation] had even reached the skirts of the Creator's glory,

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[11] The Prophet, his daughter Fatima, 'Ali and their sons Hasan and Husain once sheltered under one cloak, whence these five are often called collectively by the title, "Ahl-i 'Abba."

For although the Essence of the All-glorious is exempt from vexation, He dwells in the heart, and no heart remains unvexed.

I am afraid that when they record the punishment of his murderer, they may forthwith strike the pen through the Book of Mercy.
I am afraid that the intercessors on the Resurrection Day may be ashamed, by reason of this sin, to speak of the sins of mankind.
When the people of the House shall lay hands on the People of Tyranny, the hand of God's reproach shall come forth from its sleeve.
Alas for the moment when the House of 'Ali, with blood dripping from their winding-sheets, shall raise their standards from the dust like a flame of fire!
Alas for that time when the youths of that Holy House shall dash together their crimson shrouds on the Resurrection Plain!
That company, whose ranks were broken by the strife of Karbala, at the Resurrection in serried ranks will break the ranks of the uprisen.
What hopes from the Lord of the Sanctuary [God or His Prophet] can those worthless ones entertain who wounded with their swords the quarry of the Sanctuary?
Then [finally] they raise on a spear-point that Head [i.e., the head of Imam Husain] from whose locks Gabriel washes the dust with the water of Salsabil [one of the rivers of Paradise] (Browne 1959, IV: 175-177).

While the foregoing may not be great poetry (and, of course, it loses much in translation) nevertheless it does reveal some of the deep emotion which the remembrance of the tragedy of Husain never fails to arouse even in the most irreligious of Persians. Even non-Muslim observers have been deeply affected by the drama of Husain.

Emerys Peters has described these rituals as "a moving and significant experience" (1956:176). Opler (1964:84) also refers to similar ritual performances in India as a "moving, colorful and dramatic ceremony." Other western writers have made similar comments. Even Gibbon, in his monumental work, The Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire, found an

occasion to remark on the martyrdom of Husain "In a distant age and climate the tragic scene of the death of Hosein will awaken the sympathy of the coldest reader" (1898; vol. V:391). Sir Lewis Pelly, the translator of many of the passion plays (ta'ziya) has further remarked that "if the success of a drama is to be measured by the effects which it produces upon the audiences before whom it is represented, no play has ever surpassed the tragedy known in the Mussulman world as that of Hasan and Husain" (1879).

The Role of the Senf in the Muharram Ceremonies

The various ritual ceremonies associated with Muharram are almost exclusively organized by the various professional groupings (senf) of the bazaar. Although various members of the ulama participate in these mourning ceremonies, such rituals are not organized by the clergy or the religious institution. In short, rituals are not sponsored by the "church" but by the populace through the asnaf.[12] It must further be clarified that it is usually not the senf as an organization that sponsors these gatherings and activities but rather particular members of these groups. Today, to some extent, the senf-i ettehadieh (guild-union) does sponsor contributions from its members. The same is true for other formal associations such as the anjomanha-ye mahalleh (neighborhood associations) which also sponsor rozeh gatherings during Muharram. The asnaf (senf), however, as we noted in an earlier chapter, are not formal organizations but are rather status groups made up of individuals who share a common profession,

[12]Some members of the ulama do have rozeh gatherings in their homes. These are financed largely at personal expense sometimes as the result of a vow (Nazr).

have similar values and religious orientations and who, because of this feel a sense of closeness, solidarity and who act, for the most part, in ways that will enhance or maintain this particular style of life. It must be pointed out, however, that even among a closely knit grouping such as this individuals differ in their religious orientation - at least in some respects. First of all, not all the members of a given senf are Muslim so they obviously do not participate in Muslim rituals. Secondly, even among the Muslims there are various degrees of piety and levels of understanding regarding religious obligations and activities. For this reason, and others such as friendship, the members of a common profession tend to group themselves into informal "cliques" (if we disregard the negative connotations of this term) or possibly "confraternities" (i.e., a grouping of men associated for a common purpose; a religious society of laymen). These confraternities form the basis of the hay'at gatherings among the bazaar tradesmen. Some of the members of these confraternities also participate in neighborhood gatherings (hay'at-i mahalleh) which I discussed earlier, and in fact, usually do. The reasons for gathering together are essentially the same as those for the neighborhood associations, that is, reading the Koran, listening to edifying and moralizing sermons, etc. However, some of these confraternities gather together not only for rozehs but also for rituals of self-flagellation associated with the rozehs. Allow me to give a few concrete examples.

The senf-i farshforoushan is made up of merchants and tradesmen who sell carpets. There are many Jews, Armenian Christians and Baha'i who are "members" of this senf and who participate in activities associated with the business affairs of this profession but otherwise have little to

do with the Muslim members of the profession. Among the Muslim members of the carpet-sellers senf are men of various degrees of education, perceptiveness, world-travel and religiosity. These men, for the most part, tend to associate with others of their profession who are of like-mind on many issues and in particular religious interpretation. Those with somewhat, for want of a better word, "esoteric" orientations tend to organize confraternities that stress a rather introspective, contemplative and transcendental view of religion and religious activity. They may stress readings of the Koran or moralistic sermons but would usually avoid participating in rozeh gatherings or if they do, they are very restrained in their emotions. Others, however, emphasize emotional outbursts and personal flagellations and organize their groupings around the rozeh sineh-zani (chest beating) and zanjir-zani (flailing with chains). In some cases both types of individuals may participate in one confraternity under the general name, for example, of hay'at-i senf-i farshforoushan (the gathering of the carpet-sellers senf). There may be, and usually are, several such groups with the same name. Each of these groups (the size of each group varies depending on the total membership of the senf) may have about one hundred regular participants, not all of whom, of course, show up at the weekly gatherings. Out of this group there is usually a group of men who prefer the more emotional and physical release of religious ecstasy and who then organize themselves into a subgroup devoted to the narration of the events at Karbala and the practices of sineh-zani and zanjir-zani.[13] Such

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[13]Informants casually mentioned that most of those who practice rituals of flagellation, especially using chains, are Azarbaijani Turks. In all cases such mentions had no discernible negative associations as is often the case when Persian-speakers discuss the Turks, but was presented merely as a matter of fact. Unvala (1927:92) mentions the same as does Bogdanov (1927:127).

groups are also named, usually with the name hay'at-i azadaran-i husaini farshforoushan (the gathering of the mourners for Husain of the carpet-seller's senf). Each senf tends to have therefore a number of confraternities devoted to regular weekly religious gatherings and also a number of subgroups devoted to the mourning for Husain which also meets on a weekly, biweekly or monthly basis depending on the particular group. Informants told me that these latter groupings are increasingly declining in popularity although it should be noted that they are still extremely numerous and active. They may be less than in the past, but are in no way inconsequential.

> During Reza Shah's reign they forbade qameh-zani [flailing oneself with a knife or sword]. The religious leaders forbade it also. Little by little the rozeh-khani and sineh-zani is becoming less and less. It is obvious that people used to go too far in this respect in the past. It wasn't becoming for Iran which is developing to have such a thing in front of foreigners. That is why police would prevent any kind of demonstration and they would prevent any kind of disorder.

Another informant noted that:

> richer and more educated bazaaris are moving out of the bazaar and to other parts of the city, especially the north - Shemiran, Golhak, etc. They no longer give rozehs in the bazaar and hence crowds no longer gather for the processions (dasteh).

Other informants commented, however, that rozehs are becoming popular among middle class women in the northern suburbs of the city.

> We didn't have so many rozehs and these things in the past, very few. But now there are a lot of them. Everywhere, all the houses here [i.e., in this area in the north of the city], all through the week, from morning to evening they have rozeh-khani. They get together, one day in this house, next day in that house. They [meaning women] leave their work and go there. Half of them use this as an excuse to escape from work. They say they want to go to face God, but they don't think about their children, mother and

> father, no one. Right now, everyone seems to be coming toward Islam. For example, we had only three or four women rozeh-khans in the past but right now there is at least one in each neighborhood. They talk for people in gatherings. As they say, they guide people.

During Muharram all of the confraternities are associated with mourning activities, but not all of the members engage in personal flagellations. A number of different ceremonies are held during the Muharram period. These ceremonies are organized by the various confraternities of the senf who choose among themselves certain individuals who are trustworthy, and dependable (mo'tamedin). During the course of the year these individuals collect money from individuals of the senf and put it in a special bank account reserved especially for the Muharram rituals. Individuals of the senf may also deposit money directly into this account at the bazaar branch of the National Bank. Part of this money is used to pay the religious leaders who narrate at the various ceremonies, another portion goes for miscellaneous expenses such as having a flag sewn to announce the gatherings, printing announcement circulars, providing decorations for the place of narration, or providing tea for participants. The major portion of the money is used, however, to finance the preparation and distribution of free food to the poor (and all-comers) on the tenth of Muharram. All contributions are voluntary and individual tradesmen give varying amounts over the year. It is considered religiously praiseworthy to contribute to such gatherings and the individual gains credit for his soul on the day of judgment.

> . . . people are used to this rozeh-khani and the people who give these as well as those who participate consider it as barakat [religious blessings]. The asnaf, because they give money are also interested in rozeh. Each senf will come together in its own area of the bazaar (mahalleh-ye senf) especially on the night before 'Ashura,

> the day of 'Ashura and the night after that. They consider this a spiritual reward for themselves and their families. They also come together to find out what is going on in the senf, what is happening and what are the new developments and to get to know each other.

The rozeh gatherings may be held at a mosque, in a private home, or in a special place like a caravanserai that has been converted to a Husainiyeh (gathering place to narrate a rozeh). The arrangements for this are handled by the specially chosen representatives. Usually, if the rituals are to take place at a mosque the particular senf has an association with a particular mosque for that occasion. In other words, some senf have precedence (because of the time factor) and prefer to have their rituals at that particular mosque on a particular day or time.

> . . . they have found someplace (i.e., a mosque) and they start their rozeh over there. The sargophli [precedence] is theirs.

For example, on the tenth of Muharram ('Āshura) the kharāziforoush (the haberdasher's senf) always have their commemorative gatherings at masjed-i sa'id 'azizullah and ayatullah Khonsāri, who is considered by many bazaaris to be the leading Shi'a theologian in Iran, usually leads the ceremonies at this mosque. At masjed-i Shāh which is the largest mosque in the bazaar the Muharram gathering in 1968 was the azadārān-i husaini senf-i javāheri, talā, noqreh, sā'at (the mourners for Husain of the jewellers', goldsmiths', silversmiths' and watchmakers' senfs). This is a particularly interesting case of cooperation among different senfs. Each of the above senfs is rather small and cannot afford to finance an elaborate ritual ceremony by itself and so several senfs gather together and pool resources.

> There are a lot of asnaf, but sometimes one senf has few people in it. They cannot afford to have the ceremony so they will join another senf and have this ceremony.

> For example, the members of the senf who repair radio and television don't believe in these sorts of things [i.e., mourning ceremonies including flagellations] but some of them have beliefs and they join another senf for the ceremonies; or the senf of the watchmakers have few members. They joined the javaherforoush (jewellers) and zargarha (goldsmiths) and all of them have one gathering.

Azarbaijani Turks also tend to crosscut senf ties and to gather together for religious ceremonies, especially during Muharram. There are Turks in all trades but they join together because of their common cultural background and language.

> Because most of them have Turkish accent (lahjeh-yi Turki) they come from different senfs and join this group [i.e., Azarbaijanis]. They will gather together in the mosque of the Azarbaijaniha which is called Masjed-i Haj Sheikh Husain at the end of the shoemaker's bazaar. It is a large mosque and they always invite a very famous va'ez for their mourning ceremonies (azadari). Their processions (dasteh) usually have flagellations with chains (zanjir-zan) and chest-beating. It is really a big and elaborate affair and attracts a lot of people. The government respects them too because they do it only for the purpose of mourning.

Another informant in discussing the guild-unions (senf-i ettehadieh) noted

> there was no ettehadieh in the past. The asnaf wouldn't cooperate and gather together like now unless in ceremonies (ayyad).

## Ritual Preparations

Preparations for the ritual mourning ceremonies are made throughout the year and reach their climax in the weeks preceding the first of Muharram. Tradesmen and artisans in the bazaar are busy with numerous last minute details. Tinsmiths (halabi-saz) and steel fretworkers (shabakehkar) are busy producing various ornaments for use in the mourning ceremonies. The attar are building up supplies of tea, sugar and other

necessities for the commemorative gatherings, while the embroiderer is busy making various flags and banners which are used by the asnaf ("guilds") to identify their groups in the processions, or to announce that a rozeh is being held. These embroidered flags and banners have elaborate scenes depicting events from the martyrdom of Husain and his associates and the name of the senf or the hay'at is also embroidered in. Further preparations are made by the asnaf for the mourning ceremonies as the large, spacious courtyards of many of the caravanserais in the bazaar are changed into Husainiyehs by decorating them with draped, embroidered or printed calico cloth (qalamkār). These courtyards are then covered over with a huge tent to keep out the inclement weather or the hot rays of the sun (since the Islamic calendar is lunar, the month of Muharram occurs throughout the seasons). Richly woven carpets are spread on the ground and sometimes hung on the walls of the Husainiyeh. Black flags with Arabic or Persian calligraphy embroidered in are placed outside at the entrance for decoration and to announce the gathering inside. It is unnecessary to continue discussing each of the many occupations that are involved in the preparations for Muharram. However, I would like to return to a discussion of the work of the tinsmiths and related occupations in order to draw out some of the symbolic implications of their ornaments.

The tinsmith prepares large, round containers (boshkeh), sometimes referred to in this context as saqqa-khaneh although they are not so strictly speaking). These tanks are contracted for by pious individuals who plan to give rozeh ceremonies and thereby distribute water to

participants in the flagellation rituals.[14] Even though the tinsmith is paid for his work he also receives savab for his action (as does the person who bought it) since any activity that is done in the name of Husain is religiously meritorious.

The tinsmith also prepares other ornaments chief among which is a cutout of a hand with fingers outstretched. This hand is then fitted to a long pole and decorated from the wrist downwards either with long, flowing cloths of gold and silver brocade or with termeh cloth from Kerman or Yazd. These are carried in the processions. Sometimes this hand is made of flat, polished steel and is a masterpiece of the metal-workers' art. The hand is often inscribed with the names of the "panj-tan" or "ahl-i 'abba" - Muhammad, Fatima, 'Ali, Hasan and Husain. This inscription may be in gold, black enamel or punched out. Some of the hands are made of silver. Besides the hand the metalworkers produce other ornaments in steel like birds, miniature tombs, bridal chambers (hajleh) or fretworked paisley designs in steel and gold. These ornaments are usually fixed on a horizontal metal bar of steel, through the middle of which is a long steel shaft which may also be engraved and incised with the above five names. A variant of this, decorated with feathers and hanging brocades, is carried in the mourning processions and is said to represent the standard of the clan of Hashim to which Husain belonged.

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[14] Water is also usually distributed free to all who thirst in the bazaar during the ceremonies and processions. However, there were poor individuals who, in the past and to some extent today, would accept money from a pious person on the understanding that he (the seller) would supply water to a public fountain (saqqa-khaneh) for the needy. The pious person would then be giving charity to a poor man - in itself a meritorious deed - and at the same time he would be the benefactor of water to the needy, another meritorious act.

Many of these standards are very old and said to be worth thousands of tomans.

Levels of Religious Understanding

The provision of a water container is not merely a generous gesture for thirsting mourners but is also symbolic of the great thirst endured by Husain and his followers in the desert of Karbala. It is believed to be religiously praiseworthy to offer water to those in need since Husain and his followers were denied water by their enemies. The incident when Ibn Ziyad, commander of the enemy forces, cut the small party off from the only possible source of water in the plain - the river Forat - is one of the most dramatic in the narration of these events. Great attention is paid by the narrator to the attempt by Ibn Ziyad to force Husain into submission with the help of an unquenchable thirst for water in a blazing desert. Emphasis is placed on the sufferings of the women and children in Husain's retinue who begin to "whither away as the burning breath of the desert envelopes them." Each participant at a rozeh knows full well what it means to thirst in a hot, desert environment while references to the unjust suffering of women and children evoke loud cries and weeping.

The hand with outstretched fingers is another symbol of great importance. Some informants said it represents the hand of 'Abbas, Husain's half-brother, who was martyred at Karbala while seeking water. It is said that one hand was cut off by the enemy as 'Abbas reached to fill a water bag. He then used his other hand which was also cut off. In a final, desperate bid to secure water for the thirsting family of Husain, 'Abbas grasped the water bag in his teeth and was finally killed (beheaded) by the enemy. Other informants, however, said the hand

represents the protective or preservative hand of Fatima; while still others said it represents the panj-tan or "ahl-i 'Abba" - Muhammad, Fatima, 'Ali, Hasan and Husain (see footnote, page 239). Each finger of the outstretched hand is supposed to represent one of these five who collectively symbolize the foundation and strength of Shi'a Islam - its unity and also familial solidarity. In the further esoteric interpretations each of the figures has further symbolic referents. Muhammad is, of course, the representative of Revelation since it was he, as Prophet, who received the divine message from God. Fatima bears the barakat of the Prophet and as such is seen as the "Virgin Mother" (batool) who has given birth to the line of the Holy Imams. She is also seen as "Fatima-Creator" (see Corbin 1970:160 and also the article Fatima in the Encyclopaedia of Islam, 1960. See also Wolf, 1969:298-299). 'Ali, as the representative of esoteric interpretation is, par excellence, a symbol of the "intellectual" approach to Shi'a Islam. 'Ali represents the inward or esoteric interpretation of doctrine, something which is not available to all, while Husain represents redemption. The martyrdom of Husain gives to all the possibility of redemption and salvation. In a sense, Husain symbolically represents action and the embodiment of the hopes and aspirations of the masses. In many respects a good portion of the rituals and beliefs associated with Husain are part of the "Little Tradition" in the sense that they form part of a complex of behavior patterns and beliefs which are frowned upon, if not overtly criticized, by the "more enlightened religious person," particularly the "ulama-yi bozorg." The "Great Tradition," in the sense that I am using it here, is represented by the symbol of 'Ali and is the esoteric, intellectualist

orientation to religious phenomena. It can therefore be said, I believe, that the symbol of Husain has taken greater precedence and is more predominant in Shi'a Islam than is the symbol of 'Ali or even Muhammad (see quote from von Grunebaum on page 264 of this study). In the Shi'a view man may be redeemed by the intercession and grace of a redeemer - and the redeemer the Shi'a have chosen is Husain, the second son of 'Ali. But why Husain and not 'Ali himself, or Hasan who is the first son of 'Ali? The reasons are unclear and in any case are, for the most part, of little concern for the thesis of this study. One point, however, is that the Shi'a believe that Husain married the daughter of the last Sassanid king of Persia - Yezdigerd III - and thus came, by his marriage, to be the heir of the Shahinshah - King of Kings - and the champion of Persian nationalism. Thus, Husain more than any other of the "ahl-i 'Abba, has ties with the Persian nation and the descendents of Husain and Shahrbanu - the other nine holy Imams - have Persian blood as well as the blood and barakat of the Prophet. As one Iranian writer has phrased it in speaking of the Fourth Imam 'Ali Zein-ul Abedin who was the son of Husain and Shahrbanu . . . "thus the godly soul was royal in his personage both from his paternal and maternal sides" (Ghaffary, n.d., p. 122).

The figure of Hasan, 'Ali's eldest son and the second Imam is, as I read the literature and notes from informants, a rather pathetic figure. He is respected because he is the son of 'Ali and Fatima and, perhaps, for his alleged piety. But the feeling I have gotten through indirect allusions rather than direct reference is that most seem to regard him as a "cop-out" - a person who renounced his leadership of the Muslim community in return for a lucrative stipend from Mo'avieh, the archenemy

of his father. Most Shi'a seem to rationalize his behavior as the following would seem to indicate:

> After 'Ali, Imam Hasan became caliph. But at that time the political and social situation of the Muslims was such that Imam Hasan didn't have any other choice except to give up otherwise it would have caused a lot of bloodshed and many Muslims would get killed without any reason. The only people who would get any benefit out of it would be the government of Eastern Rom [i.e., the Byzantine government] and also foreigners. If all those 400-500 thousand Muslims in those days would fight with each other in the war with Mo'avieh, God knows what the government of Rom would do to the Muslims after that war and the danger of foreigners would be even worse. That is why Hasan Ibn 'Ali surrendered. But this was done with the condition that Hasan never address Mo'avieh as 'Amir ul Mo'menin (Commander of the Faithful), that is as caliph. (Taped at a rozeh gathering.)

The narrator at this rozeh obviously found it difficult to explain Hasan's behavior and gave the excuse that it would cause much bloodshed yet narrations of Husain's revolution (qiyam) stress the need for bloodshed to bring the true order of religion back to society. Note the comments of Sayed Mahmud Talegaani at a rozeh during Muharram.

> This is one of Imam Husain's speeches. His aim was to make his goal clear to everybody. "People, God's prophet has said that if there is an oppressive sultan breaking God's promises, commiting sin among the people and disregarding God's orders it is the duty of everyone who is aware of these to stand up against him and try to change him either with advice or if this is not possible, with power. If one keeps quiet then God will give him the same punishment as he gives to that sultan, because by being quiet he has acted as his partner in crime" (Goftar-i Ashura 1963:112-113).

At a rozeh in the bazaar another rozeh-khan said, "a man with faith should rise up with the hope of being martyred and should love to sacrifice himself." The general view then seems to be that one cannot live under an oppressive ruler who is disregarding the principles of Islam. It is

encumbent upon a true believer to try to change the system, shedding his blood and dying if need be to protect the true faith. This Hasan did not do and the figure of Hasan therefore has little positive symbolic significance to most Shi'a and he is seen merely as one of the "ahl-i 'Abba."

The differential interpretation of the symbol of the hand seems to be related to the relative esoteric orientation of the speaker. I found no significant social class (i.e., economic, occupational or educational differences) distinctions in these views, rather some believers had a more or less "literal" view of symbols and accepted them at face value while others were more prone to "read into" the ornaments other significata. For example, a tin hand carried aloft on a pole symbolizes the severed hand of 'Abbas to some, an incident told countless times in the rozeh narrations. To others, however, it symbolizes the unity and solidarity of the Shi'a faith. Both views can, of course, be compatible with each other in that the severing of the hand could symbolically represent the attempt on the part of Husain's adversaries to divide and destroy the Shi'a party (the image of the hand separated from the body); nevertheless unity prevails in the image of the fingers and their individual significance united still on the hand. The hand is further understood, as we have seen, to represent the protectiveness and guardianship (hamieh) of Fatima.[15] It is through Fatima that the line of the Imams trace their spiritual descent to the Prophet and it is her guardianship that ensures the perpetuation of Shi'a Islam.

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[15]There is a great deal of Sufistic imagery implicity in this conception which is beyond our present purposes to discuss. See, however, Corbin (1970) and Massignon (1938).

All religious systems must accommodate the fact that men are differently endowed - some showing great moral excellence in their quest for salvation, while others are rather mediocre or pedestrian in their approach. Shi'a Islam, as understood in Iran, is no exception in this respect. In the Shi'a view there are various levels of understanding among believers. Only by spiritual endeavor can a believer try to penetrate the inner meaning of the sacred text of the Koran or other symbols of the faith. Believers are ranked informally in the bazaar according to, as one informant phrased it, "their level of understanding or perception (mizan-i dark) and their level of knowledge (mizan-i ma'lumat)." He went on to explain that God's power is demonstrated to man through two languages (lasan) - one is "speech or promises" (qowl) and the other is "action" ('amal kardan). Some people are impressed with action or with miracles and need to involve themselves physically and emotionally in order to penetrate the mysteries of religion while others "whose mental power is more complete" can understand religious phenomena by the exercise of the intellect, by logic and reason. By implication then, some people who operate at the physical or emotional level provide only a superficial interpretation of the symbol while others, more spiritually endowed, are able to transcend the superficial meaning and proceed to a more profound understanding of the symbol of the hand. Sayed Husain Nasr comments along similar lines:

> There is a famous tradition of the sixth Shi'ite Imam Ja'far al-Sadiq as follows: 'The Book of God contains four things: the announced expression ('ibārah), the allusion (ishārah), the hidden meaning related to the suprasensible worlds (latā'if) and the spiritual truths (haqā'iq). The literary expression is for the common people ('awāmm); the allusion is for the elite (khawāss); the hidden meaning is for the friends of

> God (awliyā or saints); and the spiritual truths are for the prophets (anbiya)' (1966:59).

Max Weber says much the same thing when he notes

> The empirical fact, important for us, that men are differently qualified in a religious way. . . . The sacred values that have been most cherished the ecstatic and visionary capacities of shamans, sorcerers, ascetics, and pheumatics of all sorts, could not be attained by everyone. . . . It follows from this that all intensive religiosity has a tendency toward a sort of status stratification, in accordance with differences in the charismatic qualifications (Gerth and Mills 1958:287).

Weber goes on to characterize those without these gifts as "religiously unmusical."

Mention might be made here of a related conception that has profound importance for an understanding of the Iranian Shi'a.

> The conviction that to everything that is apparent, literal, external, exoteric (zāhir) there corresponds something hidden, spiritual, internal, esoteric (bātin) is the scriptual principle which is at the very foundation of Shi'ism as a religious phenomenon (Corbin 1970:78).

Not only is this conception at the very center of Shi'ism it informs the whole world view of the bazaar tradesman. There is a long established tendency in Persian culture toward esoteric interpretation (ta'vil) not only of scripture but also poetry, science, history and literature - not to mention contemporary events (see Keddie 1963:27-63 for an extensive discussion of this view, see also Nasr 1964). One aspect of this has, of course, been the enormous influence of poetry in Persian life (see Haas 1946:84) and the dominance within that medium of sufi or mystic symbols which require explanation and amplification (see Rypka 1968:85 for a discussion of the allegoric and metaphoric use of symbols in Persian poetry and literature). The point I wish to emphasize here is that there

is an established value of esoteric interpretation strongly prevalent in and pervasive throughout all levels of Iranian society which allows the individual the right to seek for himself the symbolic, metaphysical and inner manifestations of objective reality.

This implicit value orientation, when coupled with the social, educational and economic changes that have been occurring in recent years, has provided Iranians - especially the younger generation - with the means to seek for themselves a new evaluation of the role of religion in their lives to fit in with their conception and understanding of modern life. Thus, this value orientation fulfills a traditional religious function and at the same time provides the seeds for a new evaluation of the role of religion in society.

Social Control and Ritual Performances

Permission to hold organized gatherings must be sought before Muharram from the police. A week or so before the first of the month the representatives of the asnaf along with the heads of the local police stations in the bazaar go to the chief of police in Tehran.

> He will talk to them about the rules and regulations of the country and the responsibility of the asnaf members. He asks them, especially, to obey the orders of the police officials. He discusses with them plans for the movement of the processions in the bazaar and on the streets. He will restrict certain activities and will say, for example, "in the same way that you want to keep your honor, so we like to keep our honor and that of the people of this country. This country is not yours alone, it belongs to all the people. The first thing is good order and if you have an orderly procession (dasteh) we will give you permission." The procession should only be for the purpose of mourning because the government has the experience that during mourning ceremonies troublemakers cause problems and make everyone uncomfortable. They would fight, cause fires and disorder and they would

loot, which is very upsetting.[16]

During field work from 1967-1969 my impressions of police activity in the bazaar during Muharram were that they were there to prevent conflicts from erupting between the various groups making up the processions which might lead, thereby, to even more violent emotions and confrontations between these groups and the government forces as has happened so frequently in the past. Several policemen were stationed at each intersection in the bazaar to prevent the groups of mourners from moving at random and possibly creating congestion and confusion. The lanes of the bazaar are quite narrow - in most cases only slightly wider than a passenger car - and during Muharram these lanes are crowded with thousands of mourners participating in the processions and several thousand onlookers watching their performances. At times it is literally impossible to move and with the intense heat, close bodily contact, pushing and shoving, dust and ecstatic emotions, loud chanting, beating of chests and flagellations with chains the situation becomes extremely tense and individual tempers are at the breaking point.

At certain times, when it becomes too crowded at one intersection the police "siphon off" part of a procession down an intersecting bazaar to avoid congestion. It is really the crowds of onlookers, however, which cause the congestion, pushing and general disorderliness. Sometimes when the bazaar becomes too crowded with onlookers the police stationed at the

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[16]The shop of this particular informant was looted and burned during the Mossadegh period because, I was told, he was a supporter of the Shah and anti-Mossadegh. It is therefore understandable why he should stress his fear of looters and other disturbances.

entrances to the bazaar prevent any further people from entering the already congested bazaar. Women, perhaps needless to say, do not participate in the processions and they are virtually absent from the crowd of onlookers as well. The absence of women, while having some traditionally religious sanctioning, is largely due to the sense of propriety on the part of the women and girls who avoid crowded, emotionally intense male environments. The sanctity of a religious occasion and the veiling from head to toe does not always protect them from fondling and pinching in a crowded situation.

The following statement is a clipping from a newspaper published a few days before Muharram 1969 regarding official police regulations:

POLICE ANNOUNCE MOURNING RULES

> State Police Headquarters yesterday announced regulations governing the holding of Moharram mourning ceremonies, the use of loudspeakers, the conduct of processions and the closure of places of public entertainment and the sale of liquor.
>
> Permission has to be obtained at least three days in advance for all mourning ceremonies and gatherings whether in mosques, public places or in private homes.
>
> Mourning processions will be permitted only on the 9th and 10th days of Moharram (28th and 29th of March) permission for which must also be obtained in advance.
>
> The playing of music or staging any entertainment or attraction is banned from midnight March 27th through six p.m. March 31st. Similarly all bars and cinemas and liquor shops will be closed for the same period. (Tehran Journal, 1969).

The police not only regulate the mourning ceremonies to safeguard public interest from excessive religious zeal but also monitor, through the secret police (SAVAK) and other agencies, the activities within the mourning ceremonies. In most of the gatherings in the bazaar there are

secret police in attendence who listen for anti-government or anti-Shah statements and in particular for any evidence to incite the participants to demonstrate or riot against the government. The presence of secret police and the threat of imprisonment often prevent the speaker from voicing his grievances directly and such grievances are usually phrased in a religious idiom. Sometimes, however, a religious leader is carried away by his emotions, or possibly his defiance, and makes very direct statements. Note the following statements taken from a rozeh gathering during Muharram 1963 - the period of violent demonstrations against the government.

> Gentlemen, today the Zionist is like the imperialist. In our country it is in the form of Baha'ism. They have penetrated in all our government. Oh, you gentlemen who are the representatives of the government - THOSE WHO ARE HERE SECRETLY or not secretly, this is the request of Islam. It doesn't matter if you are the head of the government or beneath it, you get angry and ask why I say these things. Well, don't let me say it, prevent me then it won't be my duty any more to talk about these things. But when I come here I have to talk about the Islamic laws and boundaries. [The speaker goes on to explain that he is angry over the persecution of certain individuals and then says . . .]
>
> I tell you my nerves are shattered. Whatever I say I am responsible for it. Don't go to the host (saheb-i khaneh) tomorrow and question him and ruin his life. He is not responsible. Come to me and tell me that I have lied or I have talked against religion or I have colluded with embassies - say anything you want, even make a file for me. Mr. Minister of Agriculture! Isn't there any Muslim advisor in this country? If we don't have an engineer bring one from Switzerland, or India or Germany. Does it have to be a Zionist Jew as an advisor for land reform? (Goftar-i 'Ashura 1963: 106-108).

The speaker was Sayyed Mahmud Taleghani who was arrested after this speech and later sentenced to ten years imprisonment (see Lambton 1964:120 and also Lambton 1969 for a discussion of some of these events leading up

to the demonstrations of June, 1963). Such direct political-religious speeches are not uncommon during the Muharram ceremonies and indeed during any mourning ceremony held throughout the year although with increasing effectiveness of the government forces such statements are generally made with greater discretion and subterfuge. The multivocality of the symbol of Husain greatly facilitates the expression of "dangerous views" in apparently harmless guise as we shall now see.

## CHAPTER SEVEN

## CASE STUDY AND DESCRIPTION OF A RELIGIOUS GATHERING

In order to integrate the background material in Part I of this study with Part II, I would like to present a verbatim account of a rozeh gathering held during the month of Muharram, 1968. The model on which this approach is based is that of Clyde Mitchell's study of the Kalela Dance (1956). In this work Mitchell develops a case-study approach of a particular ritual event - a dance - and systematically describes: the appearance and organization of the dance team, the nature of the dance and songs, the functions and attractions of the social situation. From this Mitchell proceeds to analyze out the main categories of interaction, in this case tribalism and prestige, invoking relevant social areas - tribal distance, joking relationships, prestige-ranking - as required for the explanation. He briefly discusses also, the origin of the dance and an account of the particular dance which was its precursor. Fortes also used the case-study method in his study of the great Harvest Festivals of the Tallensi as a way of introducing his analysis of the ritual interdependencies of their clans (1945) and Bateson uses the naven ceremony as the entry point into his study of the whole society. Similarly, the rozeh rituals commemorating the death of Husain not only exhibit the ethos of Shi'ism but also provide an occasion for the analysis of the social system at certain critical points where disturbances and struggles, symbolically portrayed, provide an insight into the various structural alignments of urban Iranian society.

## An Analysis of Ritual Speech Events

In this section I make certain assumptions about my data which seem to interconnect and proceed logically from one another. Perhaps the basic premise upon which my analysis rests is that religious performances and rituals are acts of communication. This view focuses on the "expressive" quality of religion and therefore the primary question is not so much what does ritual do or what is it believed to do but rather what does it say?

In an earlier section I indicated that such acts of ritual communication are structured ways of passing information to some supernatural power in the form of ritualized or personalized prayer while information is also received from such supernatural powers in the form of Revelations or Signs. If we proceed further it will become clear that religious communication also says something about the individuals participating in the ritual performances. For example, Leach views ritual as a form of symbolic statement which "says" something about the individuals involved in the action - particularly by expressing their social status - and so makes explicit statements about the social structure.

If ritual "says" something about individuals to whom are the things said? Unless we accept the reality of supernatural powers, the obvious answer would be that symbolic statements are being made to other members of society. If this is the case then it should be possible to analyze ritual communication with the same kind of analytic framework with which sociolinguists analyze language in its social context.

The religious gatherings and narrations which I shall present are all named speech events in the sense that Dell Hymes has used this term (1972). I shall follow his general framework rather than his specific suggestions for analysis. For my purposes, each speech event is associated with a number of factors of analytic importance which help me to understand the

meaning and significance of that event for the participants. These factors[1] include (1) the setting, or the time and place of a speech act and the general physical circumstances surrounding the event; (2) the speaker or sender of the message; (3) the receiver (s); (4) the message form and its content, i.e., the topic being presented and the mode in which it is expressed. Members of a group generally know what is being talked about and they also know when what is being talked about has changed; (5) the code or system(s) of meaning which is communicated; (6) the scene, which is the "psychological setting" appropriate to a given utterance or portion of the narration. Hymes clarifies this by noting that within a play on the same stage with the same stage set, the dramatic time may shift "ten years later." Obviously in daily life the same persons in the same setting may redefine their interaction and its goals as a changed type of scene, say from formal to informal, serious to festive, or religious to political. What is said, how it is said and other factors are used to define scenes and to create a psychological predisposition for a particular message; (7) the goals or purpose of an event may have one meaning from a community standpoint and another to the people who are engaged in it. The strategies of the participants are an essential determinant of the form and content of speech events and indeed, whether they are performed at all. It should also be recognized that the goals of the participants may not be uniform.

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[1]Such factors will not necessarily be referred to by name in the analysis of the material but the ideas which they represent will form the structure on which the analysis is based. That is, I may not use the title "setting" at the beginning of a section, but the discussion contained in that paragraph will include relevant data regarding the time and place of the speech act and the general physical circumstances surrounding a given ritual performance. To use such titles seems to convey an aura of artificiality which inhibits the narrative flow of my discussion.

The motives for participation and the expectations to be derived from such action may be quite varied; (8) key refers to the general tone, manner or spirit in which an act is done. Speech acts which may appear the same in terms of setting, participants, message form and the like may differ in key, for example, between mock and serious. To illustrate, a ritual is performed by the bazaaris to commemorate the death of Omar, the second caliph of Islam. The ritual performance is set up exactly like a rozeh with participants appearing to mourn his death. However, it is a mock commemoration performed to ridicule the memory of Omar. For example, a rozeh khan is invited to deliver an eulogy for Omar. At the appropriate places in the eulogy indicating tragedy and misfortune the participants do not cry as they would for one of the Imams but rather laugh, clap their hands and hoot since any misfortune occurring to Omar is seen as a time for joy and happiness. Elegies are turned into songs of insult, curses and slander; the sermon is full of sneers and there is parody and satire throughout. During the ritual popcorn is served. The name for popcorn is normally noqreh pir-i san in standard Tehran dialect. In the colloquial dialect of Tehran, however, it is known as chos-i fil which is an indecent expression meaning "elephant fart." The use of popcorn in this context is meant to convey even further disrespect to Omar although it is a neutral food in other contexts. Thus, we can see that key may characterize the manner or spirit in which an act is performed including nonverbal signals; (9) channel refers to the medium of speech which is transmitted, such as oral, written, semaphore, etc. Oral transmission must be broken down, for example, into further modes of use such as singing, humming, whistling, chanting, speaking, etc. There may be alternation among these in any speech event; (10) genres refers to the general categories of communication such as poem, myth, proverb,

riddle, curse, prayer, lecture, chant, etc.; and (11) feedback which refers to the fact that the messages which are received by the participants also affect the messages that are sent. This is seen in the type of response which the narrator receives from his utterances, such as crying, exclamations of sadness and sorrow, etc. The fact that the speaker is invited back to a future rozeh gathering or to officiate at some other ritual performance is further feedback and an indication that the participants appreciate what he has to say. If they didn't agree with his point of view, they could choose someone else since there are many others to choose from.

Within this analytic framework I shall be particularly concerned with meaning or semantics. Following Colby I define ethnographic semantics as "those aspects of meaning in a language which are culturally revealing . . . [and which] are directed toward words as a means rather than an end. The ultimate goal is an understanding of the evaluations, emotions, and beliefs that lie behind word usage" (1966:3).

But it is not the words alone that give meaning and affectivity to utterances. A word rarely stands aloof from others and maintains its existence all alone; rather words tend to combine with certain others in various contexts. A word is in a sense neutral until it is placed in a context and related to other words. Izutsu, for example, speaks of the "basic meaning" of a word such as yaum or "day" in Arabic and which holds that meaning even when taken out of the context of the Koran. But, put into a context with other words it assumes wider meanings. The "relational meaning" is something that is connotative that comes to be attached and added to the "basic meaning" by that word's having taken a particular position in a particular semantic field. A semantic field is a set of patterned relations between certain words of a language. The words which make up a

semantic field generally have certain features in common with other words in the field while at the same time they stand in diverse relations to all other words in that system (see Lounsbury 1964; Colby 1966a, 1966b; Izutsu 1964). Izutsu notes that within the total Koranic context there are numerous "semantic fields," one of which is composed of words relating to Resurrection and Last Judgement. This field or conceptual network which is constituted by these fields can be called the "eschatological field."

> As is natural, an intense atmosphere of a very unusual nature pervades the whole field and reigns over it. Right into this atmosphere you put the word yaum with its proper, neutral meaning of a "day"; which it has in normal situations; at once you see a variety of conceptual associations formed around it, and the concept of "day" becomes tinged with a marked eschatological coloring. In short, al-yaum - "the day" means in this particular field not an ordinary day, but the Last Day, i.e., the Day of Judgement (Izutsu 1964:20-21).

The sum total of all the semantic fields and their component words makes up, then, a vast and intricate network of multiple relations which, in the present context, can be seen to form part of the ethos or weltanschauung of the Shi'a tradesmen of the bazaar.

If words take on somewhat different meanings in different contexts and in association with other words; and, if words are symbols then it follows that symbols are multivocal in nature - i.e., they are susceptible of many meanings or significations (Turner 1969a:8-9). The view which I am stressing is similar to Turner's analysis of ritual symbols among the Ndembu:

> In the positional dimension we see the meaning of a symbol as deriving from its relationship to other symbols in a specific cluster or gestalt of symbols whose elements acquire much of their meaning from their position in its structure, from their relationship to other symbols. Often a symbol becomes meaningful only in its relationship to another symbol in terms of binary opposition or complementariness . . . it is an established fact that many symbols are arrayed in antithetical pairs during certain phases of certain rites. Here their relationship may crucially influence

> the meaning they situationally possess. But the same symbols may be arrayed in triadic or plural formations in company with other symbols in other phases or in other rituals, or may appear alone. Again, dominance of one over another in asymmetrical pairings or in clusterings of the "solar system" type may be "positionally" prominent. My own view is that where one has information about the "exegetical" or "operational" meanings of a given symbol, one can see very well that even though only a single designation of that symbol is situationally manifest, the "penumbra" of latent senses . . . is nevertheless "present." Latent sense of symbol A may be "projected" upon symbols B, C and D, which are present in the same "symbolic field." Thus a symbol must always be regarded as "dense with meaning," even when only a portion of this richness is situationally emphasized or "visible" through the symbol's "structural" relations with another symbol or other symbols (1969a:13).

Words and the context in which words are placed, represent a particular perspective on the world. This perspective is not predominantly an individual one but is rather social and arises out of the peculiar sociohistorical situation of the group. Even more specific is the fact that subcultural or status groups further determine what aspects of reality are to be isolated and from what point of view. That is, the process of carving up reality into separate domains is always dependent upon and directed by the subjective interests of any particular community or group. The subjective personal concerns of a population select out of a wide range of phenomena those factors which are felt to be essential in demarcating, delimiting and maintaining their way of life.

The various semantic fields that make up the weltanschauung of the bazaar tradesmen and the specific meanings that are attributed to these are learned and shared by members of the communicating group. While the overall framework which structures the speech events under study is Islamic and particularly Shi'a, this does not mean that all Shi'a Muslims in Tehran are able to decode

the multiplex meanings in ritual performances.[2] Aside from the meanings usually attributed to Shi'a religious symbols, the bazaar tradesmen are aware of an additional system of coding which is learned within bazaar culture. As Gumperz has pointed out, following Garfinkel, the interpretation of communicative acts always, without exception, depends upon the speaker's or receiver's background knowledge. Background assumptions may be signalled as part of the message through the choice of words, speech style, or stress and intonation; or they may be implicit in the actor's view of the situation and speech event. In some instances the message which is communicated depends heavily on the words which are used, while in other instances non-lexical communicative devices (stress, intonation, code switching, etc.) take greater prominence in the interpretations of what is being communicated. To some extent, the greater the reliance on words, the more accessible the message is to others who do not share the speaker's background experiences and knowledge (see Gumperz 1972:22-23). But given the multivocality of symbols the "obvious" meanings of words may not convey the multiple meaning intended by the speaker.

The concepts, categories, labels and perceptions; that which is good, bad, desirable and undesirable; are all common aspects of the cognitive maps of the bazaar tradesman. That is, through the processes of socialization and enculturation the social structure marks out selectively for the individual what is relevant and important in the environment. Participation in the cultural system of a particular status group implies that choices are made or preferences are established for some alternatives rather than others. These are developed and stabilized through time and serve as a bulwark of group cohesion and a means of status distinction.

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[2]For a discussion of the problem of the "levels" at which social actors have learned and internalized a particular ideology, see Spiro 1966:1163-1164. Tambiah 1970:229 also has some comments on this.

The Rozeh Gathering

The particular gathering was hosted by a tradesman in the bazaar who was a dealer in notions, such as pins, needles, threads, tapes, buttons, etc. He sold both wholesale and retail and was, I was told, quite wealthy. His wealth could also be seen in the type of home he had, the size and quality of his carpets and other such indices of wealth. My informant, whom I shall call Ibrahim, was a broker dealing in the same goods. He asked me to attend the gathering with him, after first obtaining permission from the host several days prior to the event, while his explanation for his own invitation was enlightening.

> I am invited today because I have been his friend [i.e., of the host] and at the same time I have business dealings with the senf of the haberdashers . . . [but] if you want to know the truth it is because they want to know how much profit or benefit they can get from me and what kind of contracts or agreements I can arrange for them with other companies or factories so they can get benefit out of it. That's why I am invited, otherwise it is not for prayer. . . . Seventy per cent of them [i.e., tradesmen] go for financial reasons. Even if they have a beard, it is for financial reasons.[3]

We were greeted at the entrance of the house by our host who proceeded to direct us to the garden where the ritual performance was to take place. The garden was quite large and completely covered with fine carpets. We had arrived somewhat early (about 7:30 p.m.) and therefore spent a short time in conversation with others as the other participants in the hay'at began to arrive. During this time the host and his servants were finishing up last

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[3]The reference to a beard in this context is actually a reference to the characteristic stubble of beard which the majority of bazaar tradesmen have on their faces. Such a stubble is an identifying characteristic of a religious bazaar tradesman. Although I could find no Koranic or other justification for it, informants note that it is religiously praiseworthy to maintain a constant stubble of beard - what appears to be equivalent to a three or four day growth of beard and not a full beard. The meaning of the informant's statement would seem to be that even the outward signs of religious piety such as a beard are for financial reasons. Presumably, one is trusted when one has the appearance of religiosity.

minute details such as setting up the microphones and loud-speakers.[4] After greeting the host most of the participants went to the small pool in the center of the garden and performed their ablutions prior to saying their evening prayer. While some performed their prayers at that time, most waited until the pishnamaz (prayer leader) arrived to lead the group in prayer.

About 400 men were seated on the carpets - cross-legged - when the ritual got under way. There were some women in attendance, but they were secluded in the house behind curtained windows. Some of the men brought their sons with them (daughters may also have attended with the women but I have

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[4]On another occasion several informants and myself were engaged in a conversation about this man. Reza, one of the informants, commented that the host pretends to be religious since he is always making public statements about his religious intentions, charitable works, etc. Jamshid interjected, "Once he had a rozeh for Imam Husain and then he thought he should climb up a ladder to the roof top to fix one of the banners. He went up on the ladder and put some nails in the wall so that people would see what a good Haji he is; that he himself does things for Imam Husain. As he was doing this the ladder broke and he fell and broke his leg. He was in the hospital for a month." Another informant commented, "He says that he could have been killed but that Imam Husain caught him." Abbas said, "Well, there are things like this. The Shah has always said he has been protected when people tried to assassinate him. I really don't know about these things but I think it is somehow effective." Reza said again, "The reason he fell from up there was because he was pretending." Abbas again interjected, "Well, he was pretending for religion and that's why God saved him, otherwise he could be dead by now."

It is interesting to see that some of the informants interpreted his fall as punishment for religious pretense; whereas others said or implied that his fall was an accident and that he was saved from death by the intervention of Husain or God - if it weren't for such supernatural aid he would surely have suffered more than a broken leg. Both "factions" accepted the fact of his pretense - one condemning it, the other justifying it if it is done in the name of religion, i.e., the pretense was for a "good cause."

no direct information on this) but none of the boys were older than 12 or 13. The age range of the men in attendance was not great. There was perhaps only a handful of men who were in their twenties or thirties. Most seemed to be forty or above with the majority being in their upper fifties or early sixties. The very young boys seemed to enjoy being with each other. They weren't listening to the sermon once it began but were clowning around and poking each other although they were not permitted to stand or walk about. During the narration, usually at the mention of the Prophet's name, the narrator called for the audience to respond in unison in a praise to the Prophet and his family (salavat). The young boys thoroughly enjoyed this, shouting at the top of their lungs and exaggerating the words of the salavat (alāhommā sāleh ala Muhammad va āl-Muhammad) in mock piety. Since Islam has no formal confessional or "confirmation" into the faith as in Christianity and Judaism, it would seem that the attendance of these young boys at rituals of this kind provides for an initiation into the rituals and values of the faith as well as the world view of the bazaar tradesmen.

The bismallah, which is the formulary expression at the beginning of each chapter of the Koran and the first words one encounters on opening the Koran, is used to begin any activity or undertaking. It is therefore also the phrase which indicates the beginning of the ritual performance. As it is being said, the participants' voices, engaged in general conversation, are reduced to a whisper out of respect as they realize the speaking of the bismallah is an act of "sanctification" transforming a mundane gathering into a religious occasion. The va'ez (preacher) at this particular gathering continued to develop the aura of sanctity by reciting a few verses (ayeh) from the Koran in Arabic. A hadith is often also recited in Arabic. The use of Arabic in a religious context concentrates the attention of the

participants on the pulpit (minbar) and is meant to carry them away from the material world into a spiritual one.

After the prayers, the va'ez spoke for about forty-five minutes praising the Prophet and his descendants (such formulary praises are known as vasf). At each mention of the Prophet's name the audience responded in unison with a salavat. Often the va'ez himself calls at various points in the narration for a salavat response from the participants; perhaps just in order to give him a brief moment of rest from his continual speaking. However, such action has a rhetorical purpose as well, for it enables the va'ez to get the participants to chant in unison at frequent points in order to gain their emotional participation and to build up a group feeling of emotional tension for consummation at a later point.

The role of the va'ez and specifically the introductory remarks of praise are essentially to set the stage for the rozeh-khan or narrator who is to follow. It often happens that the rozeh-khan takes on the duties of the va'ez as well, so that he first recites the prologue and then delivers the narration. At the more elaborate gatherings the host will pay a number of religious leaders to come and perform each of the steps in the ritual. The less elborate and hence less costly have one religious leader who performs a number of functions such as leading the prayers, reciting the prologue, delivering the sermon (mo'ezeh) and narrating a rozeh.

After the va'ez finished his praises he stepped down and there was a pause of several minutes as the rozeh-khan appeared from the back of the garden and moved toward the pulpit.

A particular rozeh-khan (or va'ez for that matter) is chosen to address a gathering largely on the basis of his ability to speak well (bayan-i khub). This includes a good knowledge of spoken classical Arabic, and specifically the ability to involve the audience emotionally in the dramatic

presentation. The fact that few people understand or are able to follow the spoken classical Arabic is of little consequence, although sometimes the speaker will translate into Persian.[5] I have a number of recorded tapes of these gatherings and on one the narrator translates from Arabic into Persian yet the translation has nothing whatever to do with the Arabic. I checked this out with a professor of Arabic at the University of Tehran who verified my translations. It seems that sometimes it is possible for the speaker to say something in Arabic, presumably something he memorized, and then to say something in Persian which he passes off as the translation. In the instance I have recorded of this the participants may not have been aware of the discrepancy - certainly they said nothing at the gathering. If they were aware of the discrepancies such a "mistake" would no doubt be one of the factors which enter into an evaluation of the speaker's abilities and prestige. One who makes such mistakes, if they are caught, would have less prestige than one who knew what he was talking about. Indeed, the bazaar tradesmen are very critical of a person whom they say wears the robes, turban and beard of a religious leader yet does not have any knowledge to back it up and merely exploits the charity of the people from whom he solicits aid.

The pulpit or minbar which the rozeh-khan ascended is actually a series of wide steps, usually three or four, on the last of which the narrator sits. It has two arm rests and is often cushioned. The minbar during Muharram is draped in black bunting. The fact that the rozeh-khan sits on the minbar

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[5]While the participants may not understand the Arabic that is used, informants generally agreed that sheer attendance and hearing, without necessarily understanding, is efficacious and the participants gain merit (savab), blessings (barakat) and protection through their attendance.

raised above the audience may have the effect of allowing his voice to travel clearly to all areas of the gathering. In most instances today, however, microphones and loud-speakers are almost always used so there would not seem to be the need for a clearly demarcated raised position. On the other hand, his raised position and the separation of the minbar from the audience by several feet of clear space undoubtedly creates in the mind of the participant the impression that the rozeh-khan is in some way different from the rest of the participants. He is literally and symbolically above them and separated from them by a symbolic distance. His clothing is also different in that he wears the turban and robes of a religious leader. I stress these points because it has been said innumerable times that there is no clergy in Islam. Theoretically, any Muslim may officiate at any religious service and, if knowledgeable, can perform funeral rites, rituals associated with birth and other rites of passage, including marriage. Yet, in every instance known to me specialists performed these services and other functions. A religious hierarchy, known collectively as the ulama (i.e., the "learned ones") is clearly in a position of religious superiority over the masses of believers, presumably on the basis of their superior religious knowledge. Yet, knowledge is for the most part unrecognizable in daily interaction and it is the symbols of religious authority, such as particular styles of clothing, a full beard, public deference and respect, the elevation of speakers at mosques and gatherings, the distances which are set up to create a gap between them and other believers that clearly distinguish them and the roles they play in society. All of these factors and many other symbolic characteristics have unequivocally created a "clergy" in Shi'a Islam (see Binder 1965 for a discussion of the role of the ulama in Iran, although he is in error on many points; see also Algar 1969, 1972).

The following is a verbatim account of the narration given by this rozeh-khan. I have chosen this particular narration from among the many I attended and taped because it is typical in almost every respect of those given at other times throughout the year. I realize that by making a statement like this I am liable to the criticism that such an approach is scientifically invalid since it may not indeed have been a "typical" event and therefore any conclusions which I draw from this data lack confirmation from statistics derived from a large number of "cases." Quantitative and statistical analysis are, no doubt, important tools of analysis, but they are tools only and should not be deified nor should qualitative insights be derided. In defense of this position, if any need be given, I would like to quote the following:

> The nature of the anthropologist's engagement with culture in the context of intensive method carries with it certain sources of insight and understanding which are simply not available in extensive methods. It is hoped that this difference of approach can be preserved in the social sciences. Often the advocates of one grand social science imply, perhaps unconsciously, the abandonment of any type of verstehen and the substitution of the computer or the social survey. It matters little whether the torch is kept alight by people who bear the label "anthropologist" or some other, but the need for a variety of approaches and methods in the social sciences is critical (Bennett and Thaiss 1970:333; authors' italics).

Rozeh Narration

Narrator: Let us call a blessing on the Prophet and his family!

Audience: [responds in unison with a salavat, that is, alāhommā sāleh ala Muhammad va āl-i Muhammad - God's Peace and Blessings be upon Muhammad and

the Family of Muhammad"][6]

Narrator: IN THE NAME OF GOD THE MERCIFUL, THE COMPASSIONATE[7] (this is the bismallah or formulary phrase "sanctifying" the occasion).

Audience: [several people in the audience are repeating the bismallah after the narrator].

Narrator: [begins speaking in Arabic only part of which I will translate]

Thanks be to God, the Exalted, the Omniscient. There is no God but He! He has complete Power to protect his creatures and is Merciful and Benevolent! Greetings and blessings to our leader and prophet - the obedient servant, the constant and firm, the chosen one of glory - He is also called by the name, Ahmad [the most praiseworthy] and by the name abu-l qassem [the father of Qassem] as well as the exalted Muhammad.

Audience: [at the mention of the prophet's name, the audience responds in unison with a salavat].

Narrator: Greetings and blessings to Muhammad and his family and curses and damnation to his enemies until the day of resurrection (ruz-i qiyamat) [the narrator continues with a hadith, or tradition of the prophet, in Arabic, but since he offers a Persian translation in the following narration, I feel it is unnecessary to repeat the Arabic here].

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[6]The inclusion of the phrase . . . "and the family of Muhammad" is a Shi'a addition to this praise of the prophet indicating the Shi'a belief that God praises and blesses Muhammad's descendents through Fatima (i.e., the Imams) as well as the prophet himself.

[7]In the following narration BOLD TYPE indicates a loud-voiced, rather emotional enunciation of the words so indicated. In other words, a particular rhetorical style of the narrator.

A1 In this hadith, the Honorable Messenger (rasul-i akram), the
2 Seal of the Prophets (khātem al nabiyā) explains that Gabriel was sent
3 by God to the Prophet. After bringing greetings to him from God he
4 said, "Oh, messenger of God, God the exalted One (commands) you to give
5 the good news to those who have come to believe God and the prophetic
6 mission and believe in the friendship (vala) of your family, that because
7 of their faith I will pay them for their good actions and they will go to
8 heaven."

B1 What I want to get from this discussion is that God, the exalted One
2 says to the Prophet [quotes Arabic] that means, without having the friend-
3 ship of the Prophet's family it is impossible to go to heaven. Aside
4 from believing in God and the Prophet's mission, the main condition for
5 going to heaven is to have the friendship of the twelve Imams, the first
6 of whom is 'Ali ibn abi taleb and the last one is our Mahdi - salavatollah-o
7 alaheh [everyone shouts a salavat], the Imam of the Time.

C1 Right now the scholars who have been to the moon say that the moon
2 is habitable. We accept it also, but the planet moon doesn't have rotat-
3 ing movement (harakat-i vasn'i); that means it cannot produce the twelve
4 months and four seasons. One of the signs of God's wisdom is that he has
5 given the planet earth rotating movement as well as revolving movement
6 [around the sun] (harakat-i enteqali). But the planet moon only has re-
7 volving movement. That means for six months it gets very hot and for six
8 months very cold. But the planet earth has revolving movement, which means
9 it moves around the sun, as well as rotating movement which means it ro-
10 tates around itself. As a result, it produces twelve months and four
11 seasons. Just as the living condition on the earth is based on twelve
12 months and four seasons in order that the great and small can continue to

13 live on the earth so salvation on the Day of Resurrection is also based
14 on the friendship of the twelve Imams. The twelve Imams are the same as
15 the twelve months. These twelve Imams also have four seasons - spring,
16 autumn, winter and summer. Here the four seasons mean four pillars (rokn =
17 foundation, main element). The first pillar is 'Ali ibn abi taleb. The
18 second pillar is Imam zein al-abedin [peace be upon him - alaheh al salam].
19 The third pillar is the perpetual one of the Imams (da'emol a'meh).
20 'Ali ibn Musa al Reza [the eighth Imam] and the fourth pillar is the
21 Guardian of the Time (vali-yi asr), our Imam of the Time (Imam-i Zamān)
22 [the twelfth Imam]. God, the most glorious, may He be exalted: Our
23 Relief and Comfort and Most Noble.

Ca1 Tonight, dear listeners and religious people, I will talk to you about
2 the first and second pillars; and I pray for your happiness and salvation
3 to the Imam of the Time.

D1 Why is 'Ali the first pillar? First,[8] 'Ali is abu'l a'meh, that
2 means he is the father of the other eleven Imams. Secondly, if 'Ali
3 had not come into existence there would not have been a bed-fellow (ham
4 khoft) for Fatima. 'Ali's personality is even higher than the past
5 prophets. Why? Jesus, who was sent by God, was one of the rightly guided
6 ones. The mother of Jesus, Maryam - peace be upon her (alaheh al salām) -
7 was the maid (khādemeh) at God's house. When her delivery pain started,
8 God sent her away from the door of His house. But, when Fatima bint
9 'Asad, the mother of the Commander of the Faithful (amir-ul mo'menin, i.e.,
10 'Ali) started her delivery pain in front of God's house, she called and
11 said, "Oh God, by the honor (abru) that this child in my uterus (rahm)

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[8]These ordinal numbers are those of the narrator.

has with you. . . . [speaker did not finish the sentence]. First of all, how did Fatima know that this child had honor with God? Mas'oudi has written about Fatima bint 'Asad in his Athiat-ul vasiah that she said "When I was pregnant with 'Ali the Prophet was living in our house. Everywhere Muhammad used to sit, this child in my uterus used to turn and move his face toward the Prophet. I could hear that with a loud voice he [i.e., 'Ali] used to say "Greetings to you, oh messenger of God," that is why I knew that the child I have in my uterus is blessed." When he was born the wall of the Ka'ba split open and for three, or as some people say, four days he was the guest of God. [reads poem of praise of 'Ali in Arabic, but does not translate into Persian] Such happiness does not happen to anyone, except 'Ali, that he be born in the Ka'ba and suffer martyrdom in a mosque. If you look at all of history, page by page, you cannot find a man who has been born in God's house and leaves the world in God's house except 'Ali ibn abi taleb.

E1 'Ali ibn abi taleb is that man who, in the period of rough waters and decline [because of] idol worship and the opposition of the Arab leaders to the Prophet's appointment, was the only person who rubbed their noses in the dirt and who believed in the Prophet of Islam and broke the fence around idol worship. Fourthly [narrator skipped the enumeration of the third], 'Ali is that man who, at the battle of Uhud, made his chest as a shield for the Prophet of Islam when the devil changed himself into Zoa' ibn naragheh and called with a loud voice [tape recording not clear but narrator is speaking in Arabic]; which means "People, be aware that Muhammad has been killed." This news caused great fear among the troops and everyone started to run away except 'Ali who protected the Prophet from his enemies. It has been written that in this battle he

13 received 90 wounds in his head, neck, chest, belly and leg, but he was
14 not injured in the least (kham beh abru niyāvarad). At this time the
15 Proclaimer [i.e., Gabriel] between the sky and the earth called and said
16 [quotes Arabic but doesn't translate] Gabriel descended and saw 'Ali's
17 bravery. The Prophet said, [again quotes Arabic]. That means, "Ali is
18 mine and I am for 'Ali."

F1 Fifthly, 'Ali ibn abi taleb is the man who, when in the desert of
2 Ghadir-Qom, where the sun was so hot that water in the water skin was
3 boiling (sic). Gabriel descended and said, [quotes Arabic and then trans-
4 lates into Persian]. "Oh Prophet, right now in this place we must acquaint
5 these people with 'Ali. He lifted him up above their heads and said
6 [quotes Arabic and then translates into Persian]. "Oh people, recognize
7 your master. Whoever turns his face from his master, God will send his
8 curse upon him." But why is Zein ul-Abedin the second pillar while we
9 know that Husain is the confirmer (ebda' konandeh) of Islam? Why is
10 Husain not the second pillar, but rather Zein ul-Abedin is? In the hadith
11 it is written that in the same way that the prophet became the founder
12 of the religion of Islam, that is, he "planted" (ehdas) the tree of Islam
13 among the nonbelievers, so Husain, with his holy rise (qiyam-i moqadas),
14 purified and cleansed (etqah') the tree of Islam. That means that Yazid,
15 who was actually a worm (kerm), was trying to destroy the roots of the
16 tree of Islam but Husain, who was the gardener of this tree, sprayed a
17 little bit of D.D.T. on this worm and destroyed him forever.

G1 Carlyle, the greatest British writer, says "If Husain would have
2 sworn allegiance to Yazid, Yazid would have given Husain the best govern-
3 ment. But Husain was not the type of man who would bend under oppression
4 (setam) and injustice (bi-dad) [Some women in the background are talking

quite loudly]. Husain poured the drops of his blood onto the tree of Islam.[9] He irrigated Islam with his own blood and that of his friends." Then, Carlyle says, "These drops of blood became a wave until it became like a stormy sea and drowned Yazid's palace of dictatorship (kakh-i diktatori) in it." Then Carlyle says, "May my soul be your ransom, oh noble man of Karbala." Another learned Frenchman by the name of [not clear] who became a Muslim says, "History brings war and as time passes the wars will be forgotten, but the only battle that is unforgettable [speaker raising his voice in a loud pitch.] IS THE BATTLE OF KARBALA AND HUSAIN." He also says, "As time goes by the greatness of Husain will be clearer and the blood of Husain will be fresher." If you look, you will see in the city and in the suburbs [mentioned the wealthy and westernized suburb of Shemiran explicitly], in the alleyways, in the houses, and mosques and gardens - everywhere there are black flags floating in the air and moved by the breeze of Spring. These flags bring the smell [memory] of Karbala and Husain to the noses of lovers [people in the audience are beginning to cry loudly]. It reminds them of the day of 'Ashura and also of Karbala and Husain.

He was such a good politician even in pain,
that the greatest politicians were amazed.

He gave his life and soul and bought the soul of the world.[10] While history does not remember anything like this.

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[9] Some poets and writers of the Romantic period in Europe attempted to study the religious consciousness of Islam and to present sympathetic accounts of Islam to a largely biased Christian West. Carlyle was one of these writers. See Gabrieli 1968:17-18.

[10] Note the metaphors of buying and selling, so characteristic of the Islamic perspective.

H1 The difference between Yazid's friends and Husain's friends was this that
2 they [i.e., Yazid's friends] used to say, "Oh Yazid, how much money do you
3 give us? How many dollars (sic) do you give us so we kill Husain for you?
4 If you give us dollars we will commit this crime for you." But Husain's
5 friends used to say, "We will be with you until death. We will follow
6 you until they kill us and if they don't kill us we will still be with
7 you." Someone has written in the history books that one of the martyrs
8 of Karbala was a man who, for forty years, followed his evening prayers
9 with his morning prayers [that is, he was praying all the time]. In
10 these forty years he used to read one line of the Koran every night.
11 Sometimes when you have a tooth pulled out, you receive a shot to make it
12 numb and you don't feel any pain. Well, these people were also so much
13 in love with Husain that they wouldn't feel any pain. This man says,
14 "Come and kill me and beat me, I am in love with Husain." Their (sic)
15 bodies were numb with the love of Husain.

I1 Let me tell you a story. One day I was coming back from Mecca with
2 a group of people by boat. I had a long discussion with one of the Sunni
3 ulama about the Shi'a and Sunni. At the end, when he was trying to change
4 the subject because I think he was stuck in a bad situation he said to me,
5 "I also cry for Imam Husain, but why do you beat yourself and cry?" He
6 admitted he cries too, but he asked me this question. He said, "Why do
7 you beat yourself or use a sword to hurt your body, while the Prophet of
8 Islam has said you should not do that?" I answered, "Everything you said
9 is right, but you didn't account for one thing. Between you and your
10 father there is a feeling called love (alāqeh). Although you are separated
11 from your father still you have feelings of love (mohabat) toward him.
12 If once he gets hurt you get upset. Sometimes a son will die by hearing
13 about his father's death, or he may have a heart attack. Why? Because

they have strong feelings toward each other. They are tied together by the chain of love. It doesn't matter how far they are from each other. This love is also between two brothers, father and child, husband and wife.

J1 Islam says, natural love is not enough - love should be spiritual also. Two hearts should become one heart. Islam says all people are brothers; everybody is connected to everyone else. This building, for example, is made of bricks, iron, plaster. It is made of different things but all are connected to each other. If you try to pull the iron out of it all the plaster will fall down, all the bricks will fall. One believer with another has the same relationship.

K1 It is the same if an anklet would be taken off of a girl's leg - a girl who is under the protection of Islam.[11] The greatest man in Islam, the first man in Islam, amir-al mo'menin [i.e., 'Ali] said, "if a Muslim dies of sorrow [because of this girl] I won't blame him." Islam has given this kind of feeling and sentiment ('ātefeh) to all its people. So if a man sees his leader (pishvā) is under oppression (setam) and tyranny (zolm), how do you think he feels? He will feel very sorry. A man has done everything to save human beings from imperialists (ista'mar), from oppression and tyranny and enables human beings to reach the maximum of humanity. How much love do you think we will have for such a man? How do you think we feel when we see him in trouble? This man [that is, the Sunni 'alem on the boat] thought for a little while and said, "you are right." I said, "you mentioned it yourself that everytime

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[11]The reference here is to the anklet or khalkhāl which girls used to wear in the past (and still do in small villages) and which symbolize virginity.

you read about Imam Husain's life you cry. Why? The reason you cry is because you see they have killed a descendent of the Prophet. It is very natural that we feel upset and cry when we see even an ordinary person being killed. But this feeling of sorrow increases or decreases in different circumstances. Otherwise, everybody gets upset when they see some ugly behavior ('amal-i zesht).

Therefore, people consider Husain as an Imam and the Prophet's replacement (jā-neshin-i peyghambar) - that means they consider him the leader of society with all the best characteristics.[12] How can a man help it but cry when he sees him in trouble? Some people lose control and hit themselves. Of course, Islam says you should not hit yourself without any reason. Islam says you should not commit suicide, it is forbidden. But when a man hears that they are killing his son, he will have a heart attack. Has he committed suicide? No! It is the same when he beats himself and cries excessively. It is because he loves him and he cannot control himself and he forgets about himself.

This is why the Lord of Martyrs (Sayyed ul Shuhada - Husain) and also his son [Zein ul-Abedin] have said, "We are a group of people whom God has endeared to others' hearts" (mā az ān dasteh-i hastim ke khodā mohabat-i mā rā dar delhā qarār dādeh). [Speaker became very excited and in a loud, almost thundering voice and sitting on the edge of his seat, continued . . .] IF YOU SEE WE ARE MOURNING (azadāri) TODAY IT IS BECAUSE WE WANT TO SHOW OUR SINCERITY TOWARD IMAM HUSAIN. BECAUSE WE

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[12]The Persian word peyghambar means "messenger" and is used as the equivalent of the Arabic word rasul. Both are synonyms for Prophet. Husain in this context is seen as the Prophet's replacement in that he was the conveyor of a message, presumably by his death.

KNOW HIM AS AN IMAM WHO FOUGHT AGAINST OPPRESSION (setam) AND TYRANNY (zolm) BY GOD'S ORDER. AND BY GOD'S ORDER HE WAS IN THAT SITUATION. THE REASON WE CRY TODAY IS BECAUSE WE DON'T WANT TO GIVE UP TO TYRANNY. WE HIT OURSELVES ON OUR HEAD AND CHEST SO WE DON'T GO UNDER THE PRESSURE OF DICTATORSHIP - BECAUSE WE DON'T WANT TO ACCEPT COERCION. WE DON'T WANT TO ACCEPT ANYBODY'S ORDER EXCEPT GOD'S. IF WE CRY FOR IMAM HUSAIN IT IS BECAUSE HE IS THE ONE WHO WAS SENT BY GOD TO RISE UP (qiyām kard) AND BRING JUSTICE TO HUMAN BEINGS. SO RIGHT NOW [speaker's emphasis] IF WE WANT TO HAVE JUSTICE AMONG HUMAN BEINGS WE SHOULD BRING IMAM HUSAIN BACK TO LIFE. TO BRING IMAM HUSAIN BACK TO LIFE! IMAM HUSAIN WAS NOT MADE OUT OF SKIN AND BONE. IMAM HUSAIN STILL [speaker's emphasis] ASKS FOR HELP. HE SAYS, "COME TO THE BATTLEFIELD AND HELP ME!" WHAT SHOULD I DO? I HAVE TO FOLLOW HIM. HOW? BY RISING AGAINST TYRANNY (zolm) AND OPPRESSION (setam). THAT IS, I DON'T CONSIDER IT MORE IMPORTANT TO OBEY CREATED BEINGS THAN THE CREATOR. [In a still highly emotional but nevertheless somewhat subdued tone, the narrator continues.]

N1 Imam Husain has said, "People fight against God in order to please Yazid and I have come against them." So why do we cry? Why do we beat our head and chest? IT IS FOR THE PRESERVATION OF JUSTICE. IT IS TO PRESERVE THE RELIGION OF ISLAM. IT IS TO PREVENT PEOPLE WHO TRY TO RULE WITH FORCE, WITH THE FORCE OF THE SPEAR AND WITH MONEY AND LUST (shahvat). We cry and beat ourselves so the unfortunate person doesn't go under the pressure of tyranny.

O1 WE HAVE BEEN CRYING FOR 1,000 YEARS. IT DOESN'T MATTER IF WE CRY FOR ANOTHER 10 MILLION YEARS, IN ORDER TO BRING JUSTICE AGAINST TYRANNY. WHEN CAN WE LAUGH? THE TIME THAT WE DON'T GIVE IN TO TYRANNY.

I cannot laugh as long as tyranny is ruling [speaker's emphasis]. I CRY IN ORDER TO RESIST (moqābeleh konam).

P1 I will tell you something [presumably said to Sunni on boat although may also be speaking to audience] so you can remember it. Zahra the Pure (zahrā-yi athār), after her father died [Zahra is another name or epithet for Fatima, daughter of Muhammad and mother of Husain] was always crying. Why? Because she had lost her only father - a father like Muhammad. Of course, she had to cry. But this was not the only reason. She was trying to prove that the Prophet was the rightly chosen one (bar haq) and his orders must be put into action. BUT FROM THE DAY THAT HE DIED THEY DIDN'T FOLLOW HIS ORDERS. THE REASON ISLAM WENT BACKWARDS (aqab raft) GRADUALLY WAS BECAUSE THEY DIDN'T FOLLOW HIS ORDERS. ZAHRA WAS CRYING BECAUSE SHE WANTED TO SHOW AND TELL PEOPLE THAT NOW THAT THE PROPHET WAS GONE HIS ORDERS ARE GOING TOO. WITH HER CRYING SHE WAS ASKING PEOPLE NOT TO LET THE PROPHET DIE AND GET DESTROYED - NOT TO LET THE PROPHET'S ORDERS GET DESTROYED. SHE WAS WORKING IN A NEGATIVE WAY (manfi kār mikard). WITH HER CRYING SHE WAS PROVING THE TRUTH OF HER FATHER, OF HER HUSBAND, OF HERSELF AND OF ISLAM. SHE WAS SAYING THAT THESE PEOPLE WHO HAVE COME TO POWER ARE NOT AWARE OF ISLAM [speaker's emphasis]. THE TRUTH OF ISLAM HAS NOT PENETRATED INTO THEIR HEARTS - THEY ARE SUPERFICIALLY MUSLIMS. THE MEANING OF ISLAM IS NOT BEING FOLLOWED BY THEM. IT WAS ZAHRA'S CRYING THAT PROVED THE TRUTH OF ISLAM.

Q1 The Shi'a also, by having mourning ceremonies for the Lord of Martyrs, by putting black flags up, by repeating the story of Imam Husain's life, by talking over and over about the bravery of the youth

of the clan of Hāshem (bani-hāshem), by talking about the people who were martyred in this way, have convicted tyranny. [again, in a rising, emotional tone of voice] ISLAM ALWAYS SAYS TYRANNY HAS TO BE DESTROYED AND JUSTICE SHOULD TAKE ITS PLACE. ZAHRA HAS CRIED IN ORDER TO PROVE THAT TYRANNY IS DEFEATED AND TRUTH IS VICTORIOUS. SHE HAS CRIED IN ORDER TO ACQUAINT HUMAN BEINGS WITH JUSTICE. We see the effect which the life story of Imam Husain has had on others. If the Shi'a would not have kept this life story alive and if the Shi'a hadn't emphasized the events at Karbala how could Nehru have written about the Lord of Martyrs? How could Gandhi say, "I have learned from Imam Husain"? Great people who didn't know about Islam have admired Imam Husain's course of action (rāvesh). The Shi'a cry and moan until they can make the world understand that tyranny is defeated and justice is victorious. Human nature is such that it gets upset by oppression, but some people get more upset than others. Even you [the Sunni 'alem on the boat] said you get upset and cry for Husain.

R1 I used to have a grandmother, God bless her! In the year of 39 [1339 or 1960-61] I came to Tehran. I committed a wrong act and took the entrance examination at the university and passed. I am originally from Mashad. Anyway, I passed the exam. Gentlemen! This grandmother of mine was very strange. Only rarely can you find a great old woman like this. Of course, this woman's husband was a learned man (ahl-i 'ālem, i.e, one of the ulama), the late Haj Akhabari. Our host knew him. Anyway, one of my friends told me that my grandmother was sick. I went to visit her and she said, "Turn the light on." I noticed that her condition was very bad. I turned the switch but it didn't go on. I said that the bulb

doesn't work. I went to the other room to test the light to see if there is electricity or not. She asked me if there is electricity or not and I answered yes, but the bulb doesn't work. So I went out and bought a a new bulb and changed it with the one which was not working. She said, "Now turn on the switch" and I did and the light went on immediately. She said, "See, it is just like the light of the Imam-i Zamān [the twelfth or hidden Imam]. Let it not be that in our house one lamp does not work." She was just an old woman. She said, "If a lamp is not working, even though it is connected to the electricity, [claps hands very loudly] NO MATTER HOW MANY TIMES YOU TURN THE SWITCH, NO MATTER HOW MANY TIMES YOU SAY HUSAIN, IT IS NO USE. A Shi'a who is like a broken lamp, no matter how many times he says, Husain! Husain! it is no use. If you change this lamp, then you need say Husain only once. Once is enough. That is, you should become so immersed in the salt marsh (namak-zār) of Husain's friendship that you change [sic;presumably he means here that one should try to be immersed in the spirituality of Husain].

S1 You see, gentlemen, in order to clean a ritually impure object (sha'i najes) we have to first remove the pollutants and then we need ritually purified water (āb-i kor). That means, first you have to change yourself at the Club for the Dissemination of the Message of Husain [this is the name of the gathering, somewhat of an awkward translation for kolup-i tabligh-i husaini]. You must throw out the badness, and put away your ugly actions, then drop a tear from your eyes. This works like ritually purified water (āb-i kor). It will make the cells in your body clean [participants have begun to weep and moan].

T1 Husain is like a life boat (kashti-yi nejāt) [participants are weeping,
2 moaning and calling out, voi! voi! which is a Persian exclamation of
3 grief, comparable to "woe is me," "heaven save us," "alas," etc.]. HUSAIN
4 IS THE ONE WHO, WITH HIS HOLY INSURRECTION (qiyām-i moqadas), CAUSED ISLAM
5 TO BE SUCCESSFUL. HE PRESERVED THE PHRASE, 'THERE IS NO GOD BUT GOD'
6 [speaker's emphasis] THAT MEANS, IF IT WERE NOT FOR HIS INSURRECTION NO
7 ONE WOULD REMEMBER THE PROPHET.

Ta1 YOU SEE, RIGHT NOW THAT I AM SPEAKING, DOESN'T IT LOOK LIKE THE BLOOD
2 OF IMAM HUSAIN IS FLOWING?

U1 DON'T YOU COME FROM [your homes in] VARIOUS PARTS OF THE CITY ALL
2 THE WAY TO THE BAZAAR TO THE HOUSE OF HAJ OMRANI? [the host] IT IS HUSAIN'S
3 BLOOD THAT BRINGS YOU HERE;OTHERWISE THE CLUB, WHICH BEARS THE NAME OF
4 HUSAIN WOULDN'T BE IN EXISTENCE;OTHERWISE GOD'S RELIGION AND THE PROPHETS
5 OF THE PAST WOULD NOT HAVE BEEN KNOWN.

V1 So, how come, although Husain is the establisher of religion (ehdās
2 konandeh), still his son, Imam Zein ul-Abedin is the second pillar? I
3 will explain it to you.

W1 The bells of the unprotected caravan of Muhammad's family who had
2 been captured [i.e., Husain's family captured after the defeat at Karbala
3 who were being taken as prisoners to Damascus] were ringing as they were
4 taken from place to place. The sound of these bells, while it indicated
5 capture, in reality it was the sound of propaganda. How was it propaganda?
6 The bells tolled the message that Husain's blood was being brought back
7 to life. [Loud outbursts of weeping and moaning, especially among the
8 women in the secluded women's area] Ladies, don't cry! Pay attention.
9 When they entered Kufa, people would bring them bread and dates as

alms.[13] Those who were captives[14] when they saw that people have gathered around them, they decided that it is time for propaganda (tabligh). They knew that they should not keep quiet and they should do the right propaganda. Zaynab said, [quotes Arabic and translates] "Oh people of Kufa, the highest Truths are inviolable." If she were in Damascus she would not have said this sentence. Do you know why? Because the people of Damascus had not shared the moral qualities of the Prophet's family.[15] For six months they were under the dictatorship of Mo'avieh [weeping among the audience]. Mo'avieh had spread the seeds of enmity among the people in such a way that the people broke off from 'Ali. Once an Arab by the name of Khoja' used bad language to Imam Husain. Imam Husain asked him if he was from Damascus. He said "yes," and Husain said, "Mo'avieh has made foul language part of the people's language, and you people consider it a great happiness to use such words for the family of the Prophet, oh you poor people." Khoja' said, "I took a few steps back and thought to myself what a bad thing I have done. I was amazed at such a great man and such great morality and

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[13] Kufa had been the seat of power of 'Ali in his opposition to Mo'avieh and hence the people of Kufa were generally supporters of 'Ali and Husain. The Narrator continually states that the prisoners were taken to Kufa, yet no written account that I have read nor any other narrators have ever stated this. In all cases references are made that they were taken directly to Damascus. Virolleaud quotes the Arab chronicler Kashifi to the effect that the route that was taken was through Mosul, Nisibin, Harran and Alleppo to Damascus - that is, the northern route and not through Kufa which is in the south (1950:103, fn.1).

[14] Among those who were captured, the most important were Husain's son Zein ul-Abedin who was spared death at Karbala, Husain's sister Zaynab and Husain's wife, Shahrbanu and Husain's other sister Um Kulsum. Others were also present such as Fatima Zubeida, the very young widow of Qassem, Husain's nephew.

[15] Damascus was the capital of the Umayyad dynasty under Mo'avieh whom the shi'a execrate for his opposition to 'Ali and who is the epitome of evil.

such a great religion [Shi'a]. Who is Mo'avieh compared to Husain? Again, Husain said, [quotes Arabic and translates to Persian] "If you regret it, it won't be counted as a sin for you, and you should not be ashamed of yourself either. Just tell me you regret it and I will forgive your sins." Khoja' said "From that moment on, the most beloved person to me was Husain."

X1 Then, the people of Kufa relaized that these people are the Prophet's family who have come to Damascus and they are in the mosque of Damascus. Gentlemen, it takes great bravery, the bravery that Zein ul-Abedin displayed here was more than his father's - Abi Abdullah [epithet for Husain].

Y1 Gentlemen, Zein ul-Abedin - in Damascus - where Yazid has caused such fear and terror - in front of the decapitated heads of his uncle ['Abbas] and his brother [presumably 'Ali Akbar] [loud, unrestrained weeping, slapping of foreheads and moaning] and in front of the other captives, said "Yazid, would you allow me to talk?" Yazid said "no." The people told him, "Let him talk because he is not in any condition to talk anyway, he has no nerve. Let him go to the pulpit and talk and see what he wants to say." So Yazid was forced to let him talk. Zein ul-Abedin said, [quotes Arabic, but doesn't translate]. Yazid called out and said, "What are you talking about?"

Z1 I don't want to say rozeh right now, just listen and learn why Zein ul-Abedin is the second pillar. See what he has done to Yazid and Mo'avieh's organization. GENTLEMEN, [claps hands loudly] HE DESTROYED SEVERAL YEARS' WORK OF YAZID AND MO'AVIEH. YAZID NOTICED THAT HE IS BECOMING DISGRACED IN FRONT OF THE PEOPLE. THE PEOPLE STARTED TO TALK TO EACH OTHER ABOUT HIM. HE FELT THINGS ARE GETTING BAD. Well, Yazid had hoped to get benefit by parading the captives, but it worked just the opposite.

AA1 YAZID, THAT CURSED, DAMNED (la'in) UNBELIEVER (kafar). THAT NON-
2 BELIEVER (literally "religionless" - bi-din) WHO USED TO BITE HIS
3 MOTHER'S BREAST IN CHILDHOOD. HE BECAME THE CAUSE OF THIS CALAMITY IN
4 HISTORY. HIS CRUELTY WAS INFAMOUS. THE WIND BLOWS THE FIRE OF HELL TO
5 IMPURE (na-pak) FACES LIKE YAZID.

BB1 CURSE TO IBN ZIAD WHO PUT SUCH A SCAR ON THIS WORLD![16] CURSE TO
2 SHEMR ZEL JOUSHAN [the soldier who actually killed and beheaded Husain]
3 WHO DID AN EVEN WORSE DEED THAN THESE TWO ACCURSED [i.e., Yazid and Ibn
4 Ziad]. AT THE PRESENT TIME THERE ARE LOTS OF SHEMRS EVEN WORSE THAN THAT
5 WICKED, DAMNED ONE. ON THE SURFACE THEY SEEM GOOD BUT INSIDE THEY ARE
6 LOW. THEY ARE CONSTANTLY READY TO AMBUSH PEOPLE. LIKE A LEECH THEY SUCK
7 PEOPLE'S BLOOD. DURING THE DAY THERE IS NOTHING BUT TUMULT (hayāhoo)
8 AND AT NIGHT, WITH PLUNGING NECKLINES (gariban-chak) THEY ARE IN THE ARM
9 OF FRIENDS. THEY ROB PEOPLE OF THEIR SOUL AND PURITY (effat), THESE
10 IGNOBLE PEOPLE. THEY ARE LIKE THOSE UNFAITHFUL PEOPLE OF KUFA WHO WORE
11 GOLD CLOTHING - THOSE PROTECTORS OF CRUELTY (zolm); THOSE MATERIALISTIC
12 (dunya dar) AND BASE (past) PEOPLE.

CC1 NOW HEAR THIS ABOUT YAZID. HE WAS PROUD AND HAUGHTY (maghrur),
2 INSOLENT (motakkaber, also meaning haughty), DRUNK, FILTHY AND UNCLEAN
3 (palid, used in the sense of ritually unclean, impure, polluted). HE
4 CONSTANTLY SOUGHT PLEASURE AND FEASTING ('eshrat) AND WAS UNCONSCIOUS
5 AFTER EACH NIGHT'S DRINKING IN HIS PALACE. HIS FAITH (kish) WAS BLAS-
6 PHEMOUSNESS (kafari) AND HIS THOUGHTS WERE LIKE THOSE OF A MAGI (majus,
7 presumably he means here one who is a nonbeliever). HE DRANK WINE AND

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[16]Brother of Mo'avieh and governor of Kufa who gave the direct orders for the massacre of Husain.

8 BROKE PROMISES AND HE CLOSED THE DOOR OF MERCY TO HIMSELF. HE WAS WARM
9 TOWARD WOMEN AND CONSEQUENTLY HIS REASONING (aql) DIMINISHED.

DD1 In the past there were no elementary and high schools like today.
2 They used to have maktab. One day the father of one of the boys brought
3 some cooked rice with a cooked chicken and a jar of honey for the teacher.
4 The teacher told the boys that he has to leave the room for a while and
5 that they should not open the pot because there is a live chicken in it
6 and it may fly away. They should not touch the rice because it is the
7 chicken's feed and also they should not touch the honey because it is
8 poisoned.

EE1 So when the teacher left the room, one of the boys said to the
2 others, "I know he is not telling the truth, so let us eat the food and
3 I will answer for it to the teacher." So they did. When the teacher
4 returned he took the lid off the pot and didn't see the chicken. He
5 asked them what happened? The boy said, "You told us not to take the lid
6 off but one of the kids did and the chicken flew away." Then the
7 teacher asked, "What happened to the rice?" The boy answered, "Well,
8 since it was the food for the chicken and the chicken was gone, we threw
9 it out." When the teacher asked about the honey, the boy answered,
10 "Since we had lost the chicken and the rice, we got scared and we thought
11 you are going to punish us so we decided to commit suicide; so we ate the
12 honey, but nothing happened to us and we did not die." The teacher thought
13 to himself that because it was his own plan and lies, so he might as well
14 suffer the consequences.

FF1 Zein ul Abedin said, God is Great and the One and Only. He kept
2 telling the people of Damascus that Yazid is telling them lies. "I BEAR
3 WITNESS THAT THERE IS NOT GOD BUT GOD. The Mu'ezzin [presumably at Damascus]

shouted, I BEAR WITNESS THAT MUHAMMAD IS THE MESSENGER OF GOD [all participants shout out very loudly a salavat praising the prophet]. AT THIS TIME IMAM DESTROYED THE EFFORTS OF SEVERAL YEARS OF YAZID AND MO'AVIEH. Then he asked the Mu'ezzin to stop and keep quiet and then he said to Yazid, "I WILL ASK YOU A QUESTION AND I WANT YOU TO ANSWER - WAS MUHAMMAD MY ANCESTOR OR YOURS? IF YOU SAY HE WAS YOUR ANCESTOR, EVERYBODY KNOWS THAT ABU SUFYAN WAS THE FATHER OF MO'AVIEH. IF YOU SAY HE WAS MY ANCESTOR, SO WHY DID YOU KILL THE DESCENDENT OF THE PROPHET? Yazid put his head down in shame. WITH THIS SENTENCE IMAM ZEIN UL ABEDIN BROUGHT BACK TO LIFE THE BLOOD OF IMAM HUSAIN AND ALSO PROVED THE MEANING OF THERE IS NO GOD BUT GOD (la ela ha ellaleh). Yazid noticed that he is getting disgraced in front of the people and then he went up to the pulpit and said, "God curse Ibn Ziad! It was not my fault." Then he ordered someone to read the Koran for Husain. Zein ul-Abedin said, "The one who could read the Koran and interpret it was Husain, but you killed him and now you want someone to read the Koran for him!" In this way, Yazid, with his deceitful politics and pretense, confused the people again.

GG1 Sa'ebi says, "When I entered Damascus I saw that everywhere was decorated and people were dancing and happy. I asked them why they are happy and they said the son of the Prophet has been killed and his wife and children have been taken prisoner. [Someone in the audience shouts out YA ABI ABDULLAH, i.e., OH, HUSAIN!] Then Sa'ebi says, "As I was looking around I saw the captives on the camels and the severed heads of Husain and his friends fixed on the end of pikes [tumultuous weeping and flailing of arms among the participants]. As soon as Zein ul-Abedin's eyes saw the city of Damascus his moaning rose up [narrator begins chanting in Arabic].

HH1 Now I am going to translate [does so with the same melodic chanting as
2 in Arabic]: "I am being brought to Damascus like a Zanzibar slave, like a
3 despised prisoner, while, oh people of Damascus, my father was the Commander
4 of the Faithful (Amir ul Mo'menin) and my grandfather is God's messenger
5 (rasul āllāh). I wish my mother would not have given birth to me, so Yazid
6 could not see me so abject."[17] I am going to say some more rozeh for you.

II1 Among you there will probably be some whose life will end at a certain
2 hour. So take advantage of the time and pray. [Narrator continues to chant.]

JJ1 Imam Zein ul-Abedin was on the camel and his holy legs were tied under
2 the camel. Husain's head fixed upon the pike. I saw a holy man in front
3 of me reading the Koran [participants are crying loudly and beating them-
4 selves]. The holy man was reading and he came to this verse . . . [quotes
5 Arabic, but doesn't translate]. I suddenly saw his [Husain's lips open
6 and heard them say [again quotes Arabic but doesn't translate]. Audience:
7 [Women and men are crying very loudly, participants are weeping and throw-
8 ing up their arms, beating themselves, slapping their foreheads. Rozeh
9 and narration ends at this point but the chanting continues among the par-
10 ticipants. One person begins a solo chant while a few other people are
11 repeating certain words quietly. Women are crying. Some people are beat-
12 ing themselves. Someone shouts out]: "You could see the suffering of
13 Husain's friends even from afar. My dear Husain!" [Participants calling
14 out Voi, Voi, Voi]: "You could see the suffering of his children in the
15 caravan, Oh dear brother! Oh, you are closer to Zaynab's soul than her
16 body. Oh, dear Husain! Sometimes I see your head on the ground and

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[17] It is not clear who is speaking here. From the words used it could only be Husain, yet the context would indicate Zein ul-Abedin. As he narrates in the next section, a miracle occurred when Husain's severed head on the pike spoke, condemning Yazid. Perhaps this is what is intended here.

next time in a basket being carried to Damascus. Voi, Voi! Oh dear Husain! My dear one! My brother! We are so close to each other that there is not even the distance of a sigh between us. Oh my dear brother!" [Another participant shouts out]: "Why don't you speak to me - I who am crazy with love for you (mesle majnoon). Why don't you ask about your fatherless children, oh my dear brother?" [Someone else is chanting off in the background, while the ritual of rhythmic chest beating (sineh zani) has started very slowly. The slapping of the chests is now occurring about every four seconds and is in rhythm. Participants are working themselves into a state of ecstasy with each one sweating profusely and calling out his own statements about Husain. Almost all the chants are spoken by the participants in words that indicate it is Zaynab who is speaking to her deceased brother. Someone has introduced a new chant and the chest beating has stopped. Participants chant after the leader repeating what he says, after he finishes.] "Dear Husain, see how they have celebrated, and how they congratulate each other in Damascus. DEAR HUSAIN!" [Chest beating ritual has begun again, only the tempo is much faster than before and the melody of the chant is also different.] "In Medina we are mourning, in Medina we were mourning, because Husain used to be our Shahinshah" [King of Kings - this is the formal title of the present Shah of Iran]. [More chanting, chest beating becoming louder and more incessant, words are not clear but participants are talking about the head of Ali Akbar, the martyred son of Husain - chest beating becoming more frequent and intense. Someone shouts out]: HUSAIN! HUSAIN! [and other participants pick it up and continue shouting] HUSAIN! HUSAIN! HUSAIN! [for a full minute while beating their chests very hard, quickly and loudly. There is an intense emotional and ecstatic aura among the participants - their eyes have a "glassy" look, their heads slightly

raised. Suddenly as if by prearrangement, the chest beating and chanting of HUSAIN, HUSAIN! stops, although I saw no one give any signal and indeed there did not seem to be any leader of the group. Leaders of a chant just speak out, seemingly as the spirit moves them and others follow or not follow. Someone, however, is still chanting but it is intoned like a rozeh narration - participants are all exhausted and crying and moaning]: "I saw the head of Zahra's loved one on the end of the pike. I saw the head of Zahra's loved one on the pike. We are the descendents of the Prophet! We are the descendents of the Prophet!" [Someone shouts out a salavat - Alahoma saleh āl-i Muhammad va āl-i Muhammad. Everyone repeats after him. He then continues on, asking God to bless everyone at the gathering and participants respond by Amen! Amen! (alā amin).]

KK1 [The rozeh is finished and most of the participants begin to leave. There seem to be few traces of the intense emotionality exhibited just a few moments before; everyone seems to have "recovered" remarkably well.]

After the rozeh had concluded the rozeh khan left the pulpit and a number of people got up and left. There was also much shuffling of feet and stretching. Individuals sought out friends and a number of small groups were created each of which was engaged in conversation. Tea was again served and a general murmur of conversation pervaded the gathering. Within fifteen minutes or so a young man in his late twenties or so went to the microphone and began to recite poetry of his own composition. Portions of this poetry made critical references, by implication, to the present government.

On another occasion I met one of these young, critical poets and had a long conversation with him. He told me that not long before the Director of the Waqf organization (religious charity, now a government organization) had called him and said the Shah had read one of his poems and was impressed and

had ordered that he be given a copy of the Pahlavi Koran[18] and also sent on pilgrimages to Mashad and Mecca. They gave him the Koran and he was flown to Mashad. He said he tried to refuse but was told he "had to accept" because it was the order of the Shah. He told me he never heard anything further about the pilgrimage to Mecca. This incident is similar to others I have heard from Iranian students returning from study abroad and who, while in Europe, were critical of the government. Many of these students on their return to Iran were immediately given good jobs with high salaries in an attempt, as informants saw it, to buy their silence. By indulging critics of the regime with all kinds of benefits, these opponents were then unlikely, as the theory supposedly went, to bite the hand that was feeding them.[19] Perhaps this was the attempted policy with the young poet as well. I do know, on the basis of conversations with him, that despite the benefits he received, he was still extremely critical of the government and the Shah and was a strong supporter of the exiled Ayyatullah Khomeini who led the 1963 riots against the Shah.

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[18]The Pahlavi Koran is a special edition of the Koran prepared under the patronage of the Shah. At one of the mosques in the bazaar which is pro-Khomeini, which I visited with informants on another occasion, there was a glass case with several Pahlavi Korans which had been given as gifts to the mosque. The case was filthy and covered with dust. When I asked why such a holy object was not kept clean, I was told that it is purposefully kept dusty because these were gifts from the Shah.

[19]E. A. Bayne in an interview with the Shah of Iran quotes the Shah as follows:

> Well, this is always said by its opponents [speaking of SAVAK, the intelligence agency]. But if it was an oppressive arm, how could a group of students have carried out an attack on me? SAVAK knew of the activities of those students in England at the University of Manchester very well. Nevertheless, they came back to Iran. They <u>were given the opportunity to start a decent life</u>, but it seems they were not watched and followed or SAVAK would have discovered the plot.

Bayne notes that the Shah referred here to the attempt on his life made in the Spring of 1965, which had originated as a conspiracy among somewhat older students in the United Kingdom (1968:181; italics mine; see also Bill 1969:22).

After the poetry readings which ended about 10:30 p.m. most people left, but a few remained to talk to the religious leader. My informant and I and a few others, including the religious leader then went into the house and engaged in further discussions largely of a religio-political nature. The religious leader was given his "honorarium" at this time, thanked for his narration and invited to speak again on another occasion. During this informal conversation I asked him, "You said people should cry for Imam Husain, but yet you believe that God is all knowing - that means He knows what is best for people and therefore He decided that Husain was to be killed at Karbala. If this is God's will, why should people be sad and cry? His reply was:

> Yes, that is right. People should be happy that Husain has gone to God but you must know that God has created man with free will - man is free to choose his own way. But God also guides man. The same is also true for the Founders (abnia'), the Imams (a'meh) and the religious ulama - they came to guide human beings and make all the surroundings like heaven and to help people have higher knowledge and understanding: to take them out of poverty and lustfulness (shahvat parasti) and the love of this world (dunyā dusti) - to provide them with a quiet, honest environment, a just environment.
>
> This is why they came. Then you see they don't let a leader - a man from whom society must learn - they kill him, they turn him off . . . [He didn't finish his statement, but is getting emotionally involved in his comments].
>
> We are the caravan of knowledge (mā qāfeleh-yi dānesh hastim) and then someone comes and prevents this group [i.e., the caravan of knowledge] from progressing. Someone will destroy the leader. HOW DO YOU FEEL WHEN YOU SEE A SOCIETY IS BEING DESTROYED? [speaker's emphasis] YOU CRY FOR IMAM HUSAIN! But Imam Husain carried out his duty until the last moment of his life. Thus, they prevented a group of people from taking advantage of this opportunity, of this teacher . . . YOU WILL GET UPSET WHEN YOU SEE THEY ARE PREVENTING . . . [speaker's emphasis; didn't finish sentence].
>
> The reason we are sad is because we say, "Why should an environment have to be so bad and full of evil (fāsed)?

Why should they kill a man who was trying to help people progress toward peace and maturity? Zahra (his sister) was crying because they were destroying the structure of Revelation and the Prophetic Mission (dastgah-i vah-y va rasalat). THE REASON WE CRY AND MOAN NOW IS BECAUSE WE WANT TO PREVENT CRUELTY FROM HAPPENING. BECAUSE WE WANT TO KEEP IMAM HUSAIN'S GOAL THE WAY HE WANTED. WE WANT TO KEEP JUSTICE [speaker's emphasis].

THE REASON I SAY

> "He [Husain] brought his little child in front of the crowd and asked for a drop of water . . ."

IS BECAUSE I WANT TO TELL PEOPLE WHAT LOW CHARACTER THEY HAD. I WANT PEOPLE TO KNOW THIS SO THEY WON'T BECOME HARD-HEARTED, SO THEY DON'T LOSE KIND FEELINGS AND SENTIMENT. WE ARE TRYING TO MAKE JUSTICE POPULAR AMONG PEOPLE IN SOCIETY; TO PREVENT CRUELTY AND TYRANNY (zolm); TO MAKE PEOPLE CLOSE TO HUSAIN AND FAR FROM YAZID AND PEOPLE LIKE YAZID. WE ARE CRYING BECAUSE JUSTICE IS GONE. THAT IS WHY WE ARE CRYING [speaker's emphasis]. If people would know what amir-ul mo'menin ('Ali) was trying to teach, then people today would not have so many problems. The reason man is so wrapped up in his own problems is because the water is not allowed to follow its own course. If the water of a river runs its own way it will reach its destiny, but if it comes out of its course and goes this way and that, it will never reach its destiny - it will get lost. This is the same for human beings. WE SHI'A HAVE COME TO ACQUAINT HUMAN BEINGS WITH JUSTICE AND TRUTH AND TO DISCOURAGE MAN FROM TYRANNY (zolm) AND CRUELTY.

There have been Muslims who gave their lives [rather than renounce Islam] because they believed there is a God who sent a Revelation to Muhammad. Each one of these believers believes that if he kills he will go to heaven and if he gets killed, still he will go to heaven. He has accepted that there is a present world (dunya) and a future world (akharat) and that his actions will be carefully weighed. That is why when he would go into battle he would not care if he would get killed.

Right now there are 400 million Muslims in the world. If these 400 million Muslims had strong beliefs they could get their rights from today's world. They wouldn't have to be so humiliated and abject (zalil). Why was it that the small community of Muslims could overturn (vazhgun) the Roman and Iranian empire, even though they didn't have

anything?[20] It was because they had religion and they believed in what they were doing.

But today, even with so many Muslims they cannot obtain their rights; they cannot protect their houses; they cannot even judge freely in their own house. He [i.e., a Muslim] cannot protect his wife or child. These Muslims are not willing to sacrifice their financial benefits or their life for Islam. Are they willing to take a step for Islam? They are not even willing to give up one lustful (shahvat) moment for their religion. This year Muharram comes at the same time as the New Year's festivities ('aid-i no-ruz). Everyone should know that it is more important to mourn than to be happy. But ordinary people (mardom-i 'adi), those people who are not attached to anything, these illiterate (bi-savad) people will celebrate the festivities. But learned and educated people (dana va daneshmand) do not celebrate it. I would like you to announce to the people of your country that this is not the fault of Islam. It is true that some of the senfs show a little interest in Islam, but otherwise Islam is not among us. THE REASON FOR THIS IS THE LACK OF AN ISLAMIC GOVERNMENT.

Your world [i.e., the West] believes that Islam means people like us. Because we are weak and humiliated, so they don't want to accept Islam. Islam means us - it means small and weak countries who get thumped on the head [presumably he means colonized, imperialized peoples or those subject to the whims of stronger powers]. People of other countries then say, "Why should we accept Islam?" ISLAM IN ITS TRUE FORM SAYS "I WILL OVERTURN NATURE; I WILL RAISE THE TYPE OF PEOPLE WHO CAN GET TO THE HIGHEST POINT OF GREATNESS, TO GET TO THE MOON, TO GET TO THE STARS, TO GO BENEATH THE SEAS. IF YOU SEE WE ARE WEAK, OUR SITUATION IS WEAK, OUR WORK, CRAFTSMANSHIP AND POWER IS WEAK IT IS BECAUSE THEY DON'T OBEY ISLAM. Let me ask you a simple question. Suppose you have a disease and you know that there is one specialist in a corner of this world who can give you the right medicine and cure you. You will try

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[20]While this statement is historically correct in that the early Muslim Arabs did fight with the Eastern Roman empire (Byzantium Rum) and the Iranian Sassanid dynasty, it seems his comparisons relate to present circumstances as well. In the symbolism current in Iran today Rum is equated with the Christian West while the Iranian empire is equated at times with the present Iranian government. Hence he is implying that if present-day Muslims had a stronger faith they could defeat the Christian West and the Shah and his present government.

your best to get yourself to that person and you will accept and follow all his orders. If you get killed [sic] following this way, you will say you won't change your way and will insist on it even if you get killed. When a person is a true Muslim he will feel the same thing for religion, i.e., it means he is willing to sacrifice his eyes, ears or anything else including his life for it.

## CHAPTER EIGHT

## ANALYSIS OF THE CASE STUDY

In looking at the drama of Husain as a narrative form it is interesting to compare it to other myths in structure and overall thematic presentation. Most myths, rather than simply providing a charter for ritual behavior, seem to focus upon the ways in which life at the beginning was taken from a state of unity and stability (in this case the mission and message of Muhammad is taken by the Shi'a as the ideal conception of unity and harmony) and made into a world of diversity (the conflicts and divisiveness associated with succession to the charismatic role of the prophet). The diversity that emerges in myth, and the drama of Husain is no exception, is always established in terms of opposing forces or entities of some type - sea/sky, heaven/earth, male/female, and so on. Myths, then, commonly give a framework for a discussion of the contradictory elements within both the natural and social realms. According to Levi-Strauss one of the functions of myth is to provide a progressive mediation of the conceptual opposites or what might be referred to as the "conflict-resolving sequence."

Durkheim, Malinowski and Radcliffe-Brown all recognized that myths and rituals are associated with particular groupings in society and further that they often exemplified tension and conflict between these various segments of the social structure. But the main theme in the writings of these early anthropologists was the function of myth in overcoming the divisiveness in society in order to achieve a balance, a

compromise, for the structural maintenance of society at large.

From the writings of Simmel and other, more recent, sociologists and anthropologists, it is clearly recognized that one way of uniting a group is to call attention to a common enemy. This is the principle that underlies the unity of the segmentary lineage at its highest, most complete level of inclusiveness. In order to strengthen the group in question the gap between it and a foreign group is increased. In Leach's discussion of Kachin politics, he indicates that it is only meaningful to speak of two groups belonging together if one says or implies that they are distinguished from a third party. Since unity cannot be understood except in relation to some sort of divisiveness, they are essentially two sides of the same coin (1954:86). As Burke has stated:

> All told, "evil" is implicit in the idea of "Order" because "Order" is a polar or dialectical term, implying an idea of "Disorder" (1961:195).

But if unity can only be achieved for a society by contrasting itself with other societies, then obviously subcultural segments or status groups can achieve a degree of internal unity by emphasizing the contrast of that segment with other segments within the society. Some myths, such as the drama of Husain as interpreted by bazaar tradesmen and ulama, become devices for emphasizing and asserting the interests of one group against another rather than functioning, as Malinowski and Radcliffe-Brown envisaged, as devices for reconciling these divergent conflicts of interest. Fischer, speaking to the same general point, notes that:

> Members of other groups within the society will be depicted as somewhat inferior and misguided humans, while members of other societies may be depicted quite literally as devils and monsters. The actual degree of muting of this subsocietal conflict in myth will depend <u>not</u> on the degree of "need" for reducing conflict, which

> might be argued to be greater in cases of severe conflict, but upon the degree of effective control of the conflicts (1963:260, italics mine).

The same myth may, of course, be unitive within the society at large at one level of the myth such as the transcendental in which case it provides a common code of communication for the different levels of sociocultural integration within a given society and also inter-societally among common believers as I shall show later. At the same time, a given symbol may be given differential interpretations when, through the multivocality of symbols, the same symbols - loaded with emotional, social, economic or political significata - provide an idiom for the conflicting claims over resources and power.

Religion as Rhetoric

The religion of Islam was sent by God to man through Muhammad in order to persuade individuals of the necessity to pursue the straight path toward salvation. It would seem, in fact, that all religious cosmologies and cosmogonies are designed, in the last analysis, to persuade men of the rightness of their particular perspective. Religion, then, following the communication analogy, can be studied as rhetoric in the sense that rhetoric is the art of persuasion. As Kenneth Burke has noted:

> To persuade men towards certain acts, religions would form the attitudes which prepare men for such acts. And in order to plead for such attitudes as persuasively as possible, the religious always ground their exhortations (to themselves and others) in statements of the widest and deepest possible scope, concerning the authorship of men's motives (1961:v).

Religions in general, and rituals in particular, are ways of trying to persuade men to accept certain propositions and, as a corollary to such

acceptance, propensities toward action. Religion incites action by symbolically linking such action with mysterious supernatural realms and rewards. But how is this trick accomplished? As Geertz states:

> The notion that religion tunes human actions to an envisaged cosmic order and projects images of cosmic order onto the plane of human experience is hardly novel. But it is hardly investigated either, so that we have very little idea of how, in empirical terms, this particular miracle is accomplished (1965:205).

The following material is my contribution to the attempted solution of this problem.

## Rhetorical Style

Students of theology study different subjects in the theological schools in Qum, Najaf and elsewhere and one of the subjects is rhetoric (reshteh-yi sokhanrāni). Some students specialize in this subject and become lower level (that is, less knowledgeable) religious leaders such as va'ez (preacher), mobalegh (missionary or propagandist), madāh (chanter) or rozeh-khan (narrator). Informants from among the ulama noted that such a course of study lasts about four or five years and one studies, in addition to rhetorical techniques and sermon-writing, such things as morality (akhlāqiyat), social phenomenon (ejtimāiyat), some hadith (traditions of the Prophet and Imams) and memorization of parts of the Koran and its interpretation. But even within this group of rhetoricians there are differences. As one informant phrased it:

> There are different types. Some have studied hard, they are mature and can analyze the subjects well and can give a good speech. Others have just read certain books that are written just for this purpose [i.e., rhetoric] and they don't know anything else. The one who studies rhetoric is not very strong in knowledge. Reaching to the degree of ejtehad [ability to make independent judgments on points of law] and becoming a faghih

> [specialist in Islamic law] takes twenty to thirty years.

In analyzing the rhetorical style of the narrator I, of course, assume he is aware of the use of symbolic behavior to influence other men and induce them to action. The question arises here, as it does in seeing ritual as communication, "what does he (it) say?" What message or messages are being communicated to the audience and how is this done? In order to address ourselves to these questions we must be aware that the narrator has to answer some question for himself that will help him structure his performance. Scott and Brockriede (1969) have discussed the rhetoric of Black Power and in their analysis have outlined some of the kinds of decisions a rhetorician must make. I have selected here only the most relevant for our discussion.

First, rhetoric is seen as a transaction among people: Who should address whom? Which audiences should be treated as primary? How compatible with a speaker are these potential listeners? How credible is he to his audience? Second, rhetoric is a transaction of ideas: What philosophical positions should he take? What ideology is he to represent? How should he define his terms? What policies should he advocate? What attitudes and values should he employ as premises? What social norms should he invoke? How should he structure his discourse? What style should he develop as consistent with all his other decisions? Third, the rhetorician decides how to structure the way he and others perceive the situation: What functions does the situation invite or prescribe? What formats should he employ in it? What channels are appropriate to it? To what social contexts should he relate the situation? There are, thus, many decisions which a narrator must make in presenting his material to a

prospective audience.

Narration as Form

The speech performance of the narrator is structured and has form. In the performance presented, for example, it is clear that the speaker has incorporated a number of verbal genres such as poetry (section D); parables (the conversation with the Sunni 'alem on the ship; the parable of the narrator's grandmother; the schoolboys and the teacher); myths and portions thereof (the miracles associated with the birth of 'Ali, 'Ali's protection of Muhammad at the battle of Uhud, the severed head of Husain speaking); prayers; curses; chanting, and so on. These are speech acts which are part of the rhetorical arsenal of the narrator which structure his performance and which add to the tone and variety of the presentation. By varying the type and style of material presented the speaker is able to keep the attention of the audience. The alternation between Arabic and Persian as linguistic codes structuring the various genre also provides a similar function.

The various genre used combine into a total structure or framework which I shall call, following Hymes (1972), a speech event. The overall stylistic form which the speech event takes is narrative in style in that there is a sequential ordering of events. The narrator begins, for example, by providing divine sanctioning for the Shi'a perspective and proceeds to document the reasons why 'Ali is the true successor to the Prophet Muhammad and mentions events surrounding his birth and death. He then proceeds to discusss Husain, the son of 'Ali and his trials and tribulations and finally concludes with the importance of Husain's son, Zein ul-Abedin. Thus the framework of the presentation follows the

developmental cycle of three generations and provides an ordering of specific events moving from the establishment of a moment of origin through various transformations. The time sequence or what Levi-Strauss calls the diachronic aspect of the construction and recital of the narration is therefore not irrelevant to its understanding. The actual structuring and organization of the narration performs several functions.

First, the narrative is dramatic in the sense that it states some sort of conflict which is eventually resolved. That is, the narrative form, as form, sets up oppositions and their resolution. In the case of the drama of Husain the narrative contains two principal opposed parties during the unfolding of the drama: 'Ali in opposition to each of the caliphs that historically succeeded Muhammad, especially Mo'avieh; Husain's opposition to Mo'avieh's son, Yazid; and Zein ul-Abedin's opposition to Yazid. The narrative performance is organized in sequences of climax where expectations are aroused, resolutions are achieved and responses are evoked. The narrative drama, then, as presented is organized to carry out a persuasive intent and provide a form of "entertainment" at the same time.[1]

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[1]Dramatic performances and specifically narrative form as a style of presentation often have a close relationship to action. Peacock quotes Berthold Brecht to the effect that "drama should propel audiences toward decision to act" (1969:172). Odd Ramsöy has given an interesting example of this.

> It is, of course, both the ambition and despair of actors to have spectators who are unable to distinguish between actor and role, play and reality. In Chicago, the despair was transformed into catastrophe, when the performer of Iago was shot and killed by an officer who was outraged by Iago's villainy. The officer must have had second thoughts, for he then killed himself. They were buried under the inscription: "Here lies the ideal

A second function of the narrative form is that, by its very framework and structure, it objectifies and gives a "name" to the various perceived threatening forces and personal anxieties both within and without the group. By objectifying, giving a name to, and structuring these threatening forces in a contrived, artificial form and context the impression is created that these forces are being controlled. What is set up in the implicit framework of the narrative presentation is an embodiment of recurrent problem situations facing the participants. By projecting, objectifying and externalizing the anxiety-producing situations in dramatic stylization some relief is experienced through the sense of "magical" control.

"Sanctification"

Cohen, in discussing orthodox Islam in West Africa, notes that it is "categorically opposed to the employment of any material ritual symbols or such accompaniments of rituals as singing, music or dancing" (1969:176). He goes on to point out that if a religion is to become a guide to action it must do more than appeal to the intellect; it must affect men and motivate them to action through their emotions. We see, of course, that Shi'a Islam as practiced by the bazaar tradesmen of Tehran does indeed embody an emotional as well as an intellectual approach to religious phenomena.

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actor - and the ideal spectator" (1963:53).

Cejpek, in discussing the theatrical performances of the drama of Husain, has noted that the characters are portrayed in absolute goodness or badness and that there are "reports of actors having played the part of one of the Prophet's enemies too convincingly and thereafter having been lynched by the fanatically enraged audience" (1968:683).

Earlier I commented on the use of classical Arabic as an attention getting device and one which, in effect, "sanctifies" the gathering as well as the message to be presented. It is well known to the participants that the Koran was revealed in Arabic and therefore the Arabic of the Koran is the unchanging Word of God. By using classical Arabic in the narration the messages that are to follow become, by their association with the language of God, "unquestionably true." Indeed, this idea can be carried a step further when we note the sense of ecstasy and intense emotional involvement of the participants at the gathering. The participants experience an essentially "inexpressible" feeling, an emotional reaction. As it is a subjective, inexpressible feeling it cannot be falsified or discredited by conscious thoughts. It is real! It happens! It is felt and it therefore carries with it a subjective quality of truth. Since this experience occurs in response to "sacred" utterances on the part of the narrator and occurs in a ritual context set apart from everyday reality the whole event assumes an aura of truthfulness. In other words, the use of classical Arabic and the sense of reality and truthfulness which an emotional experience arouses combine to create in the minds of the participants the truthfulness and unfalsifiable affirmation of whatever else is said or occurs at a rozeh gathering whether these be in relation to metaphysical propositions or more mundane concerns. The narrator establishes throughout the ritual an aura of Truth through the interaction, on the one hand, of experienced emotional states at the ritual performance itself and, on the other, the style and content of the message communicated. Such a process is in addition to the congruity between general social experiences in everday life and the transcendental significance of the ritual. The reality of the former process, however,

does add to the reality and significance of the latter process.

In his opening statements the narrator reaffirms the divine sanctioning of the Shi'a perspective and indicates that those who support the family of the Prophet (i.e., 'Ali and the Imams) will achieve salvation whereas those who reject this family will not enter Paradise. Implicitly he sets up the dichotomy between the Sunni majority in Islam and the Shi'a minority - the oppressors and the oppressed. Also implicit is the fact that the supporters of Twelve-Imam Shi'ism (ithna' ashariyya) are overwhelmingly Iranian. Iranians therefore, by their wise choice in following the Imams, are a favored people destined for salvation especially vis-à-vis the Sunni Arabs. There is among my bazaar informants a very strong sense of Iranian nationalism and a low regard for the Arabs, who are seen as inferior in many different ways.[2] The nationalistic undercurrent in Shi'ism comes out also in the marriage of Husain - a descendent of the Prophet - to Shahrbanu, the daughter of the last Iranian monarch, a story which is stressed by the Iranian Shi'a and is perhaps the prime example of the fusion of religio-political views.

The call for a salavat response by the narrator (section B, lines 6, 7) not only praises the twelfth Imam but heralds a shift in the time perspective. The scene changes from the time of the Prophet to the present time - the space age. It is a call to relevance.

The earth, because it has twelve months and four seasons, can support life. This is an image of physical life - biological processes of plants

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[2]Informants referred to the Arabs, in contrast to themselves as Iranians, as vahshi ("savage, wild"), a term which is usually used for wild animals and here denoting "barbarous" or uncivilized.

and animals, changing of the seasons, etc. It is a physical conception which is quite comprehensible to the participants. Every year the participants are able to experience the full cycle of the alternation of the four seasons and are aware of the importance of the twelve months in regulating their lives. When the analogy is then made between the life-supporting qualities of these physical phenomena in this world and the after-life dependence (and to some extent the this-life spiritual dependence) on the twelve Imams and four pillars, it is clear to all participants that ultimate salvation depends on the symbolic, nurturing (life-giving) figures of the Imams.

In his narration, the rozeh-khan has provided a sense of continuity from this life to the future life through the symbolic significance of the numbers twelve and four. He has also effectively related the past (the quoting of the hadith and the authority of God's word in support of the Shi'a) to the present. In a sense, the foundations of legitimacy are to be found in the past, the ancient and in the idea of continuity. The narrator, in the ritual context of narrating the myth of Husain, makes manifest the "ancient" and "correct" blueprint for the present. It is not only a "charter" for the present in Malinowski's sense, but also seems to have some of the attributes of "The Dreaming." As Stanner has said,

> One cannot "fix" The Dreaming in time: it was, and is, everywhen. . . . Clearly, The Dreaming is many things in one. Among them, a kind of narrative of things that once happened; a kind of charter of things that still happen; and a kind of logos or principle of order transcending everything significant for aboriginal man (1965:159).

There is, of course, a clear rhetorical value in the use of hadith and other kinds of quotations from the past. Kenneth Cragg has observed that the use of the hadith is clearly a:-

> form of mediation of the past. In mediated history is continuity. The preacher, by his use of them, sets the hearer's world in the dimensions of the faith's heritage and that, no doubt, is his proper function (1959:42).

The regular injection of quotes in classical Arabic throughout the narrative reinforces this idea of the legitimacy of the past in relation to the present. It should be noted, however, that while there is a sense of continuity it is not merely a kind of conservative persistence of tradition; rather it is an active, dynamic continuity whereby the rozeh khan (and the participants) react to new conditions and try to adapt to them by manipulating the symbols of the past for present purposes. Perhaps the clearest example of such practices occurred when informants tried to explain present events and artifacts in the light of the writings of Islamic scholars of the past and also of the Koran. The most common reference in this connection was to the works of Majlesi who, informants noted, predicted many of the modern facilities which we have today.

> We have in Majlesi that a time will come when clothes that are transparent will be in use; or such a time will come when we sit here and see a friend in another city - this is television. But Majlesi himself didn't say these things - they are the sayings of the 'ameh [i.e., prophets, Imams and their descendents]. Majlesi has many books in which he has gathered the sayings (hadith) of these leaders.

Other informants "reinterpreted" various verses of the Koran to me to justify the fact that Islam not only keeps up with the times, but also predicts the future (see Geertz 1968:105 for a similar point). This type of apologia is a form of mediation between the past and the present, between a traditional world and the modern world. The process of mediation enables a person to understand the changes that are taking place by putting them into a familiar context. It also keeps the individual in

the "mainstream" of events and becomes a bridge between his world and that of his sons and the newer generation. The person does not feel left out or overwhelmed by the changes but can fit them into a meaningful context. One tradesman, in noting that Islam can accommodate changes, commented "as bazaaris move on with the times, they also keep their religion more or less. The Jewish people are the same - they keep up with the times but at the same time are able to preserve their religion."

In order to further the process of "sanctification" and legitimation the rozeh khan makes reference to 'Ali whom he considers the first pillar (rokn). It is interesting to note, however, that although 'Ali is explicitly mentioned as the first pillar of the faith, his discussion of 'Ali covers only some fifty-five lines of my transcribed text whereas his explicit discussion of Husain whom he does not mention as one of the subjects for discussion covers some 239 lines in the text. The remaining material also focuses on Husain as the central figure rather than his son, Zein ul-Abedin, who is mentioned as the second pillar and the other subject for discussion. In reality, then, the whole of the rozeh either leads up to Husain through his father 'Ali, or refers back to Husain through the propagandizing of his son, Zein ul-Abedin. Therefore, despite the repudiation of Husain as one of the four pillars (section V, lines 1-3), the narrator devotes almost the entire narration to the central figure of Husain and his martyrdom. The reasons why Zein ul-Abedin is singled out for emphasis will be discussed later in this section.

In order to extol the virtues of 'Ali the narrator makes an interesting comparison. In the Muslim view, Jesus is accepted as a prophet on a par with Moses, Abraham and Mohammad. In most Muslim contexts he is given

great respect as a chosen one of God (see page 276 where Jesus is mentioned in Muhtashim's Haft Band and see also the miniature painting of Christ and Mohammad riding together, in Gabrielli 1968:16) and among the Sufis he is placed among the greatest mystics of all religions (see, for example, Jalal al-Din Rumi's Mathnavi or the works of Hafez; also Corbin 1970). In any case, the narrator here notes that Maryam, the mother of Jesus, was a maid who was sent out of the house of God. He offers praise for her, for she also is a respected figure in Islam (a sura or chapter of the Koran is named after her - chapter 19); but nevertheless creates a negative image of Christianity[3] by his association of Maryam and Jesus with the negative image, in Iranian society, of a maid (khādemeh) and by the fact that she was expelled from God's house. By comparison is the positive image of 'Ali and his mother.[4]

Of course, Christianity has long been attacked in Islamic countries despite the theological recognition given Jesus and Maryam in the Koran (see Cragg 1956:244-270), but in the present context the narrator is beginning to develop a rhetorical style by creating certain negative images in the minds of the participants toward the West and indirectly toward Christianity as a religion. As a way of praising the "founder" of Shi'ism the narrator relates some of the supernatural powers and miracles

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[3]In all cases the reader should equate Christianity with the western powers.

[4]It is interesting to note that most Shi'a authors acknowledge that the mother of the twelfth Imam - the awaited Mahdi or Redeemer - was originally a Christian. Nasr (1966:165) notes that Nargis Khatun was the daughter of the Byzantine emperor who later embraced Islam. Ghaffari states that "His mother was Jarjes, . . . whose mother was the descendent of Sham'uoon, son of Haroon, son of Safa, the successor of Jesus the prophet"(n.d.:149).

associated with 'Ali and he is portrayed as a man whose total life was devoted to religion (born in God's house and died in God's house). Again, the close correlation between Shi'a Islam and Iran should be pointed out here. That is, the praise of 'Ali is indirectly praise for Iran and the superiority of Shi'a Iran vis-à-vis the Sunni Arabs and the Christian West.

The narrator also begins to note that 'Ali (and by implication any believer) was not only a pious believer but also a warrior for the faith - one who put his life on the line. It is especially interesting to note that at the battle of Uhud (section E, lines 6-12) 'Ali protected the life of the Prophet when everyone else had run away. What the narrator seems to be saying is that a true believer does not heed lies which can lead one astray and thereby forsake his religious duty, but rather remains steadfast to defend the faith (in this context symbolized by Muhammad).[5] He continues also the same line of thought by noting that at a place called Qadir Qom Muhammad, at the urging of God's archangel Gabriel, declared 'Ali his successor. It is presented, however, in the negative. That is, "Whoever turns his face from his Master [i.e., 'Ali] God will send his curse upon him." It is, of course, known to all participants that the main historical figure who refused to recognize 'Ali as caliph was Mo'avieh. Both Mo'avieh and his son Yazid are the symbolic images of

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[5]Lying is a theme that comes up later in the narration in the parable of the teacher lying to his students about the contents of the pot. As punishment for his lying, the teacher lost the food to the students. The children lied also about their actions but in the Iranian conception it is acceptable to lie under circumstances that might cause one hardships; while at the same time the lying of the students appears to be acceptable to the narrator as the proper response to the lying of the teacher - deceit begets deceit.

those who pursue a deviant path. They not only chose a wrong path themselves, but have also prevented others from achieving their goals.

In conclusion, then, God, through the angel Gabriel and Muhammad, has declared 'Ali to be the leader of the Muslim community. Refusal to acknowledge the leadership of 'Ali and his descendents will bring down the wrath of God. Believing Shi'a need have no fear, however, for they are following the right path to salvation.

The Legitimizing of Anti-Government Propaganda

The rozeh khan, in the course of his narration, discusses the fact that Zein ul-Abedin is considered the second pillar of the faith. In most theological contexts among the Shi'a, however, such a statement would not generally be accepted. While Zein ul-Abedin has a high stature in Shi'a Islam, it can be safely said that his stature is not in accord with the way it is presented here. The question then arises, why does the narrator say it? What purpose is there to such a statement?

In beginning to answer these questions it might be pointed out that Zein ul-Abedin is considered by the "senf" (occupational group) of the rozeh-khan to be their spiritual master (pir) or patron saint in the same way that the guilds of artisans and tradesmen in Europe, Iran and elsewhere in the Middle East and Asia had patron saints or a supposed guild founder who was worshipped or highly revered (see Sjoberg 1960:194-195).[6]

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[6]"Die Meister der Rawḍa-vortragenden (Rawḍa-ḫwan): 1. Zayn ul-'Abedin 'Ali ibn Husayn, der vierte Imam, 2. Ǧabir b. 'Abdullah-i Ansari, bekannter Profetengenosse und Autorität der Schia, 3. Šu'ayb (=Jethro), 4. Sayyid Murtaḍa, Bruder von Šarif Riḍa, einer der grösster schiitischen Rechtsgelehrten" (Meier 1964:316).

The reason why Zein ul-Abedin is the patron saint of the rozeh khans is because he is known as a great propagandist. It was Zein ul-Abedin's fearless actions in speaking publicly against Yazid, despite the possibility of death, that kept alive the memory of Husain. It was Zein ul-Abedin who disgraced Yazid in the eyes of the people of Damascus by branding him a liar, a tyrant and oppressor and one who leads believers astray from the Straight Path. The narrators see their role in society to be the same. They are the group one of whose goals is to indict the present regime and its policies, in the same way that Zein ul-Abedin indicted Yazid and his government. They indict by subtle allusions and symbolic references to historical figures and events and also by inciting people to weep and to physical violence against the government. Informants told me that a narrator is judged not only by his degree of learning but also by the degree to which he can arouse people's emotions. "He should be respected, eloquent and learned. He should know the psychology of the people and the techniques to stir them up and cause them to cry." By overemphasizing the theological importance of Zein ul-Abedin they give themselves, by association, a much higher status in the eyes of the participants. The participants are aware of the similarities between the two and come to accept the rozeh khan's statements as unquestionably true in the same way that Zein ul-Abedin's role as a direct descendent of the Prophet and his spiritual powers gave his words the authority of Truth. His propaganda brought back to life the spirit of Husain. By asking for support of Husain's cause, the rozeh khans are also asking for support for themselves - they are inciting people to support them, their just cause and their message.

Linguistic Style in Persian

It is perhaps necessary to point out that some portions of my analysis make explicit reference to the narrator's use of the present tense which I interpret as having reference to the present government of Iran. Those who are familiar with the grammatical structure of Persian will note, however, that in the linguistic style of spoken Persian indirect speech is rarely used. In almost every instance, especially after verbs of saying, thinking, knowing, etc., the tense of the verb is normally that of direct speech, although the pronoun may not necessarily be that of direct speech. For example, be man goft ke nemiāyam would be translated literally and accurately as "He told me, 'I am not coming';" whereas be man goft ke nemiāyad would correctly be translated as "He told me that he was not coming." Yet, in fact, in translations of Persian into English both sentences are almost invariably translated according to the latter, indirect speech to accord with proper style in English. In other words, it is usually the style to transform idiomatic Persian into idiomatic English which means the use of indirect speech even though the original Persian may have used verb tenses of direct speech.

I have no quarrel with this style in most instances and I have used it where the flow of narration warranted it without distorting the meaning intended. However, it should also be clear that it is not always possible to follow this style when one feels there would be a corresponding loss of meaning due to the multivocality of symbols (words). I think the use of certain key words in particular contexts amply justifies this approach. When the narrator says, "So right now, if we want to have justice among human beings we should bring Imam Husain back to life"

the meaning quite clearly refers to the present and the narrator is calling for action on the part of the participants. Yet, when he further quotes Husains as saying, "Come to the battlefield and help me!" or in the statement, "He also said, 'If a person sees a sultan is cruel, if he [reverses things and] considers what is forbidden as acceptable and breaks God's covenant, if that person, that Muslim, doesn't criticize this sultan, if he doesn't rise and prevent this cruel sultan, he and the sultan will be on the same level in the eyes of God. People! Yazid and his friends are following the devil . . .'" again the references, as I interpret the data, are to the present situation.

The use of verbs in the present tense in a quote is partly normal speech in Persian but it is also a rhetorical device of the narrators. It gives the scene presented a realistic hush especially if the purported quote is said in Arabic, the original language of the speaker and adds to the variety of tone and affectivity of the presentation. In addition, of course, it enables the speaker to put words into the mouths of historical figures - words and meanings which have symbolic significance at the present time. By making allusions to the present in words spoken by a martyr over a thousand years ago the speaker adds legitimacy to his utterances and also cannot be accused of treason or opposition to the present government. The narrator did not say the Shah was cruel and corrupt, rather he quoted Husain as saying Yazid was cruel and corrupt. No believing Shi'a could dispute such a statement. The speech style of Persian allows the possiblity of such double meanings not to mention, of course, the multivocality of the symbols themselves.

Summary

The drama of Husain as presented in narrative form at ritual gatherings is a story which has an attraction of its own because it is artfully and rhetorically conceived; but the stylistic attractiveness is essentially a device to persuade the participants into accepting the values of the drama. Acceptance is the first step in the process of acting upon, or being guided by.

The Symbolic Significance of the Figure of Husain

The figure of Husain is introduced into the narration by a British writer, Carlyle. This is an interesting way of juxtaposing two opposing themes. The intent seems to be that even non-believers and imperialists such as the British must take cognizance of the greatness of Husain - even the enemies of Islam must acknowledge his exalted position.[7]

Husain does not bend, he does not give in to oppression (setam) and injustice (bi-dad). The narrator uses two Persian words here which are interchangeable with the Arabic equivalent zolm which he uses in other contexts. The image, of course, is that of the warrior, the fighter who is opposing not just deviant individuals in society but abstract, negative phenomena on the grandest scale - Oppression and Injustice. At this point the narrator introduces the transcendental significance of

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[7]The terms "non-believer" and "imperialist" are the two basic key terms which are implicit in the symbol "British" to the bazaar tradesmen. This came out in numerous interviews and conversations. Thus, British and Husain in the same context convey polar opposites. One informant noted that he heard that the British were planning to erect a gold statue of Mo'avieh in one of their colonies in order to emphasize his importance in creating divisiveness in the Muslim world.

Husain as a Saviour figure who will, by his sacrifice, redeem the world from injustice and oppression.

I would, at this point, refer the reader to the drama of Husain as presented in the elementary children's readers on page 268. There, Husain's actions are referred to as fedakari ("self-sacrifice") and indeed, in many narrations he was referred to as a fedakar ("devotee"). This word is a composite of Arabic and Persian elements. Feda is the Persian pronunciation of the Arabic fata or "young man"; and kar is the doer of action and kari is the action itself. A fata is a man who is young and vigorous, valiant in warfare, noble and chivalrous. Among the Shi'a 'Ali is regarded as the fata par excellence. The present-day Arab guerillas opposing Israel are known as fatayeen (plural of fata) while a group of religious devotees (or fanatics as some in Iran would call them) organized a movement in Iran in the 1950's called Fedayan-i Islam (Devotees of Islam). The Fedayan-i Islam gained notoriety by its violence and political assassinations and its goals were at once nationalist and religious. As nationalists they favored a strong Iran and opposed the ruling dynasty as well as politicians in general. They felt that the ills of Iranian society would disappear if the state were run by religious men and identified imperialism with western social and cultural practices. The point I wish to make is that the term fedakar as used for Husain has a number of meanings. It means, first (but not necessarily foremost), that Husain sacrificed himself for the faith. He made the supreme gift to his fellow believers and to God. By his sacrifice Husain was entitled to the role of Saviour who alone has the keys to Paradise (see p. 264). The term, therefore, has a transcendental significance.

Second, the term has political overtones in that Husain was opposing very real forces of a tyrannic nature. By his fighting he is equated in the minds of the participants with other devotees who have fought and died for what they believed in, such as the Arab fatayeen and members of the Iranian group known as the Fedayan-i Islam. The term fedakar, then, has both an otherworldly significance and a this-worldly significance. When a participant hears the rozeh khan say, "For this reason in the month of Muharram which is the month of his martyrdom, many gatherings will be organized for the purpose of the remembrance of that Imam's self-sacrifice (fedakari) . . . he can, of course, interpret it at a purely spiritual level, having reference to the domain of the supernatural. Among the edaris or "modern" segment of the population of Tehran whom I interviewed, this "univocal" aspect of the symbol of Husain as fedakar tended to predominate. They interpreted the symbol of Husain, for the most part, in "religious" terms whereas the tradesmen of the bazaar were more inclined to see the multivocal aspects of the symbol of Husain not only as fedakar but in other symbolic roles as well. Such a distinction between a "univocal" interpretation and a "multivocal" interpretation of symbols is perhaps one indication of the differences between a "traditionalist" and a "modernist" in the social context of Tehran. That is, a traditionalist is one who does not separate religion from other aspects of society. To a traditionalist, Islam is a religion which encompasses every facet of human life and therefore the "religious" cannot be separated from the "political" or the "economic", etc. They are all one and the same or at least religion is seen to infuse all with its ideas and doctrines. Symbols, therefore, must necessarily be multivocal in order to

encompass the overlapping nature of social and cultural phenomena. To the modernist, on the other hand, religious symbols tend to have a univocal character in that the modernist does not overlap idioms belonging to another social domain. A symbol may be multivocal to a modernist within the religious sphere but not between one social sphere and another. He recognizes clear boundaries between the various spheres of interaction and exchange. In short, religious sanctioning is associated with the regulation of the entire social system to a traditionalist; whereas to a modernist, religious values are more and more concentrated into a sub-system of the society - "the church," or the "religious structure," or whatever one wishes to call it.[8]

The narrator, through the use of verbs in the active sense, implies the notion of sacrifice. That is, Husain himself poured his blood onto [the roots of] the tree of Islam. He himself irrigated Islam. Husain himself performed these actions. In shedding his own blood and undergoing great pain and suffering Husain becomes the sacrificial victim (or Redeemer, as we have seen) par excellence. The image of the Sacrificial Redeemer brings to the minds of the participants the ideas of patience, obedience, fortitude, while spontaneously there is also a feel for the negative. The sacrifice of the self for the preservation of the faith is the epitome of virtue - or, in more abstract terms, following the views of

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[8]Of course, this is perhaps a somewhat roundabout way of stating the obvious point regarding Weber's rationalization of society or Wolf's distinction between "single-stranded" interests and "multistranded" interests (1966:83). The distinction which Wolf makes seems to be largely based on Gluckman's discussion of multiplex roles and it is to Turner (1969:8-9), Gluckman's student at Manchester, that I owe the distinction between univocal and multivocal symbols.

Burke, "it is a systematic way of saying no to Disorder, or obediently saying yes to Order. Its opposite is license, luxuria, 'fornication', saying yes to Disorder, or obediently saying no to Order" (1961:190). The idea of the vicarious sacrifice of Husain comes out very clearly in the popular passion plays of Husain performed in the past in the tekiyeh of the bazaar and other quarters of the city. Note the following statement of Husain from one of these plays:

> Here is the dagger that is to fall upon my head. Well, I am satisfied, oh my God! But do not fail to keep, you also, the promise that you made. On the day of Resurrection forgive all the sinners, forgive all the Shi'a, even the most guilty, for I have redeemed them all today at the price of my blood. For me, it is with joy that I go today to find the Prophet of God and I confess that there is no other God but God (Virolleaud 1950:101, my italics).

Again, the multivocality of the semantic field in the narration carries the further connotation that the ulama, as living representatives of the Imams, are an extension of the sacrificial principle. That is, as I mentioned earlier, the ulama have set themselves apart by dress, demeanor and other distinguishing symbols. They are ideally expected to embody the sacrificial principle by practising the renunciation of worldly goods and pleasures (not, however, to the point of asceticism).

The narrator, supposedly quoting Carlyle, says "the drops of blood became a wave until it became like a stormy sea and drowned Yazid's palace of dictatorship in it." Here the image is presented of ever-increasing fury. Drop by drop the blood accumulates until it eventually becomes a sea [of protest?] and results in the utter death and destruction of Yazid and everything he represents. What he represents is symbolized by the word kakh or palace. The word kakh appears daily in the newspapers

of Tehran to refer to the various palaces of the Shah in Tehran (the kakh-i marmar - the marble palace; the kakh-i golestan - the Golestan Palace; and the kakh-i sa'adabad - or the Palace at Sa'adabad in the north of the city). The word palace, in Persian as in English, has the meaning not only of the residence of a king, but also of material wealth, opulence, luxuriousness. These words further connote in Persian degeneracy, licentiousness. The fact that the palace is characterized as one of "dictatorship" further strengthens the negative image and conveys the idea of the arbitrary use of power and oppression. The narrator obviously uses the word kakh in the context of the negative images of blood, fury, death by drowning, dictatorship, in order to make a rhetorical point.

Again the scene changes and we are brought to the immediate present where black flags can be seen floating in the air throughout the city of Tehran which recall the suffering and martyrdom of Husain. The narrator's rhetorical transition to Tehran at this stage of the narration following on the imagery of the previous context reinforces, to the participants, the exact reference that is intended. That is, that Tehran is the present battleground - the present Karbala. It is at Tehran, the epitome of modernization and change, that the battle between the forces of Good and Evil is being fought. Husain's blood is constantly fresh because devotees are still suffering and shedding their bloood like Husain, and for the same cause as did Husain. His blood is also fresh because narrators intentionally "keep it alive" by reciting the story of his death and sufferings to believers at such gatherings.

The question is now raised as to what constitutes a true believer.

Yazid's friends are ephemeral, fair-weather friends who support him when they have something to gain. The narrator specifically mentions dollars in this context and the meaning of this to the participants is again quite clear.

It is well known in Iran, for example, that Mossadegh was ousted from power by a C.I.A.-backed counter-revolution in support of the Shah (see Cook 1965; Cottam 1964; Bayne, in an interview with the Shah, provides clear evidence of this 1968:162-63). It is also known to the bazaar tradesmen that much of Ayatullah Khomeini's objection to the Shah's regime in 1963 (objections which the majority of bazaar tradesmen supported and continue to support) centered around the purchasing, by Iran, of American military equipment and other economic and legal capitulations to the Americans. The American government has been the strongest economic and political supporter of the present regime in Iran since the end of the Second World War (see Binder 1964; Cottam 1964). Laquer notes that the United States contributed almost two billion dollars to Iran between 1954 and 1967 when the U.S. aid mission in Tehran was shut down. Military aid still continues ostensibly to enable Iran to protect the northern tier against Russia's incursion into the oil resources of the south and also to enable Iran to protect the Persian Gulf from an incipient threat from "leftist" governments in Iraq or elsewhere. There is a large military presence in Iran, as well as American advisors to the secret police agencies (Bayne 1968:179). At times when various groups have risen to oppose the government's policies they have been subdued by American-trained Iranian soldiers and secret police, not to mention American weapons. Algar quotes a letter which Ayatullah Khomeini sent to Iranian

Prime Minister Hoveyda, dated April, 1967 (a few months before I began field work) in which he declares, among other things, that the present government has "betrayed the independence of Iran by granting Americans immunity from prosecution and is under the rule of the dollar (mahkum-i dular)." In addition, he notes that the "government's policies have brought economic ruin and the bankruptcy of the bazaar" (1969:43).

Husain's friends, on the other hand (and by extension, those of the ulama), are those who are willing to die, like Husain, defending the faith. The narrator notes explictly that those who fight for Husain will not experience any pain on death since the love of Husain assuages all pain and suffering. The narrator is, in effect, telling the participants that if they are killed defending the just cause of Husain they will not suffer in the final agonies of death. Death is not something to be feared if one has deep beliefs. Ibn Babawayhi said almost the same thing in the tenth century:

> When Imam Husayn b. 'Ali b. Abi Talib was hard pressed [at Karbala] those who were with him looked at him and behold! he was totally different from them. Because when in great difficulty their colour changed and they trembled with fear and their hearts were filled with trepidation, and their sides began to throb, Imam Husayn and some of his particular companions had bright faces, restful limbs and complete peace of mind. Then some of them said to others: Look at him, he does not care for death. Then Husayn said to them: Patience, O scions of nobility! For what is death, but a bridge by which you cross over from misfortune and harm to spacious gardens and eternal favours? Now which of you would dislike to proceed from a prison to a palace? And as for these, your enemies, they are like a people who go from a palace to a prison and to a painful torment (Fyzee edition 1942:54).

Note here the imagery of the palace in the context of damnation.

Of course, in the Parsons-Weber-Malinowski view of religious

phenomena the fact and expectation of death is a frustrating, anxiety producing situation, one which acquires a deep emotional investment. In the present context the statements of the narrator and the quote of Ibn Babawayhi offer a theodicy to the believer. That is, it is not only a description of unjust suffering and the inevitability of death but it is also a solution. It indicates there is nothing to be feared in death since it is nothing but a transition between this life of suffering and a life of redemption and no obligation. In this sense, of course, it points to the transcendental significance of death. But the sacrificial death of a devotee may help create and may also lead to the setting up, in this world, of a "Kingdom of God on earth" which is the goal of those idealists who stress the drama of Husain against the fact of the present government's policies of modernization and change. In this sense the theodicy of death and suffering offered to believers is both an explanation and a solution - it posits a this-worldly salvation through revolution and an otherworldly salvation through redemption. The therapeutic implications can be carried further if we assume that by having a strong love for Husain individuals can overcome difficulties in the form of illnesses, disease and other frustrations and sufferings of this life. This view is somewhat analogous to the Christian Science perspective which seems to postulate that a deep faith can overcome many physical ills, trials and tribulations. In short, there is indeed power in positive thinking. This view comes out clearly in another part of the narration where the shedding of tears has a purifying result.

The reference in section K to a leader who saves people from imperialists, oppression and tyranny is enlightening. The Arabic word

ista'mar is used in Iran and elsewhere in the Middle East to refer to the West. In this context, Husain is associated, implicitly with the Iranian ulama who have themselves opposed imperialism in Iran for some time, along with the support of the bazaar tradesmen. Nikki Keddie notes, for example, that during the nineteenth century the power and influence of the ulama increased rapidly and cites "the call for a jihad [holy war] against Russia in 1826, the demand for the repeal of the all-embracing Reuter concession in 1873, the struggle for the repeal of the British tobacco monopoly concession in 1891-92, and the Constitutional Revolution itself" as evidence of this opposition (1969:34, esp. fn. 1). I noted earlier that this pattern of opposition to perceived enemies of Iran and Islam continues among the ulama to the present day.

When a leader such as Husain is oppressed and eventually murdered (informants' conception) it is not just an ordinary crime but rather a crime against God.

> When Husain was killed, the angels clamoured to God with tears to take vengence on his murderers. His death was more important than the deaths of Muhammad, 'Ali, Fatima and Hasan. In these was consolation for men. When Husain, the last of them, was killed nothing remained to men. All wept for the death of Husain, the animals in the desert, the fish in the sea, the birds in the air, the sun, moon and stars, the heavens and the earths, believing men and djinn, all the angels of the heavens and the earths, Rizwan, Malik and the bearers of the Throne. The skies rained down blood and ashes. He who sorrows on 'Ashura will rejoice at the resurrection" (Tritton, quoting Ibn Babawayhi 1951:831).

Some men, in following a deviant path, have thwarted God's will and the crime becomes of cosmic significance.

The opening portion of the narration (i.e., sections A -J) appears, for the most part, to be a prologue to a discussion of ritual flagellation

which the narrator introduces by the way of a story. The story recounts a slight disagreement between a Sunni scholar and our Shi'a narrator (an appropriate opposition) over the proper style of mourning for Husain. The narrator also establishes for the participants his own pious credentials and his stature in the religious community by specifically mentioning the fact, albeit incidentally, that he was returning from a pilgrimage to Mecca. The mention of the word kashti (ship) on which he returned also conjures up the image of Husain as kashti-yi nejat (figuratively "lifeboat" but having reference to Husain as a savior. See section T, line 1 of narration).[9]

There are a number of anecdotes, parables, allegories and other rhetorical devices that are used by the narrator to get his points across to the participants. The story of the man who prayed and read the Koran day and night for forty years (Forty is, of course, a highly symbolic figure in Islamic society. Here it implies constancy.) is one such story (section H, lines 7-15) as is the extensive conversation with the Sunni 'alem on the boat from Mecca (section I - S). The account of his grandmother is another story which may or may not be apocryphal, although the symbolism in the story seems too contrived to be based on a real incident (section R, lines 1-26). The story of the young schoolboys is obviously contrived, and it is unclear why this particular story was told to the

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[9] von Grunebaum notes that "the Koran will serve on occasion 'as a sort of vocabulary for the language of dreams; as a ship signifies safety, because the word 'save' is used in the Koran in connection with Noah's ark' [quoting Margoliouth]"(1961:91). The image of Husain as a ship which saves undoubtedly is drawn from this analogy.

participants except to make the point that lying and deceit (on the part of the teacher) bring their own punishment (sections DD and EE).[10]

If we accept the position that these are parables in the sense that they are stories based on everyday experiences told to make a particular point of a moral or spiritual nature (see Slater 1968 and Webster's Collegiate Dictionary) then it is irrelevant if they have a basis in fact or not. What is relevant is whether the incidents and characters have some semblance to a reality or everyday experiences with which the participants can identify. Unless the parables describe something of relevance to the experiences of the hearers then the whole purpose of the allegory is meaningless. As Evans-Pritchard has pointed out,

> I have read somewhere of the predicament of missionaries to the Eskimoes in trying to render into their tongue the word "lamb", as in the sentence 'Feed my lambs'. You can, of course, render it by reference to some animal with which the Eskimoes are acquainted, by saying, for instance, 'Feed my seals', but clearly if you do so you replace the representation of what a lamb was for a Hebrew shepherd by that of what a seal may be to an Eskimo (1965:13).

Geertz has made a similar point in discussing the use of metaphors and analogies. "In a community that drinks its coffee black . . . to praise a girl with 'you're the cream in my coffee' would give entirely the wrong

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[10]McClelland notes that "Another important theme in Middle Eastern culture centers in the value placed on cleverness, trickery, or outwitting another person. To Westerners it often seems to involve downright dishonesty or lying, but as the stories from Iran make very clear, it is viewed as a positive virtue in the Middle East" (1963:177). The moral taught in the narration is the same: use your wits to get out of trouble. Honor goes to the man who can outwit his opponent by fair means or foul. Although I feel the narrator's main point in telling this story was to emphasize that those who deceive are also deceived and eventually lose out (with reference to Yazid and his actions), nevertheless it does indicate the pervasiveness of trickery, deceit and lying in Iranian society and reinforces the sense of distrust common in Iran.

impression . . ." (1964:59). It is necessary, then, in common speech as in rhetoric, to choose one's metaphors and analogues with care.

In a sense, rhetoric is a transaction of ideas whereby the speaker makes a number of ideational decisions. These decisions are at various levels of awareness. For example, he must be aware of what philosophical or ideological position he should take in that situation. How clear or opaque should he be in presenting his concepts and symbols? What attitudes and values should he employ as premises? What social norms should he invoke? What data should he use and how should he structure his discourse? Is there a particular style of presentation that is consistent with all of his other decisions? These rhetorical decisions. These rhetorical decisions and the linguistic variations that are available to the speaker are, of course, bounded by the historical events at Karbala, the perception of the speech event and its participants and the constraints of the sociopolitical situation. One constraint is, as I have mentioned previously, the existence of secret police in the audience and the fear of imprisonment which strongly conditions how the speaker presents his material.

## The Rhetorical Value of Kinship Analogies

The analogies developed by the narrator are not just any analogies. They are those which guide the thoughts or emotions of the participants. For the most part the narrator seems to be constructing emotive fields (see Colby 1966:375) whereby the participants are able to associate emotive or affective meaning with specific experiences. Sometimes a specific experience is remembered by the participants almost as a total

image or gestalt, or perhaps the emotional state one was in at a given time, is recalled. The words used by the narrator call up, as it were, these emotional associations. Smith has described this process quite well in discussing the nature of responses to folktales.

> The second observation that must be made is that the total immediate response to the presentation of any genre of folklore is not the total response, much of which is delayed. Only by virtue of this principle is folklore's function as a social control possible. Night comes; children outdoors and alone recall their earlier symbolic experience of the boogie man and their original response to the experience is resumed. Resumed, rather than repeated, because the original stimulus is not unfolded again, as it were, but rather is recovered instantly, as a whole, with all significant interrelationships apparent. A real situation thus becomes linked to a symbolic experience and acquires the affective meaning of that experience. In this case the night itself becomes a secondary reinforcement, evoking a response of avoidance. When one sees that this process can be applied to most if not all of man's life situations, one sees how tremendously important are the various genres of folklore, which can well be described in the words Cassirer used to characterize language, myth, art, and religion, as "the varied threads which weave the symbolic net, the tangled web of human experience" (1971:78).

The central analogies which the narrator uses are those which suggest the various roles and rules of life such as the role of sonship or the rule of neighborly love. At one rozeh, for example, the narrator, speaking on the commemorative date of 'Ali's death said, "Before going to his death, of which he had foreknowledge, he was at home playing with his children." This comment brought loud, unrestrained weeping and flailing of arms from the participants - and this was its purpose. At another rozeh the narrator was trying to invoke the mood of misery and death in order to arouse the emotions of the participants. Although the following quote states in the first sentence that this is the night of 'Ashura, the

narration did not occur on this date but rather on the commemorative death date of Fatima. The narrator's reference to 'Ashura is obviously to invoke an emotional mood by placing the participants at the scene and date of the event. Note it is in the present tense.

> Tonight is the night before 'Ashura and all the young people are in their tents. It is the last night of their lives [weeping among participants]. Just imagine how all these young people feel! How their mothers feel! They know for sure that their young sons are going to be killed tomorrow [weeping]. It is not a lie. This was said by Imam, so it is true. Imam said, "Tomorrow everyone at Karbala, on 'Ashura, will be killed except one person and that is the ill Imam" [Zein ul-Abedin]. So, all these mothers, all the sisters who have brothers, know they will lose their brothers [weeping]. Tonight they cannot eat, sleep or rest; there is general discomfort ruling over all the tents.
>
> [Two visitors arrive and ask to see Husain, who says] . . . "they are our friends, ask them to come in, but very quietly and take their boots off and put their weapons away." Why? [asks 'Abbas] "Because my children are asleep in the tent" [participants are weeping and wailing]. Oh Husain! On the night before your death you were thinking of your children. There was fear, shock and panic all over Karbala, but you were thinking of your children. Husain said, "Abu fazl [epithet for 'Abbas], the children are asleep in the middle of the tent. Their mothers have put them to sleep with a lot of problems. I don't want them to get upset."

Elsewhere in this study I have given other examples of the narrator's rhetorical style (see pp. 290, 297).

When our narrator says (sections I, J, K) there is a feeling of love between father and son, between brothers, between husband and wife and he relates such feelings to death whereby a son will die of grief on hearing of the death of his father, he conjures up images and feelings which all the participants have experienced. These are not abstract, impersonal features of the universe but analogies which relate people to other people with the deepest emotions. At one rozeh my wife was with the women in the

restricted area of the gathering and one woman was crying profusely and almost hysterically. My wife asked others present why this woman was behaving in this manner - behavior more exaggerated and intense than that of the other women present who were also crying and exhibiting emotion. She was told that this woman's sister had died recently, suffering a painful and agonizing death from cancer. At the rozeh she was reminded of this event and expressed her feelings unrestrainedly and without constraints. At various rozehs which I attended I asked participants what they are thinking of when they weep. While many looked at me incredulously and answered, in effect, "why Husain of course!"; others mentioned the sufferings of close relatives (often brothers and sisters), while others said they are made more aware of their own personal problems. One informant recalled the death of his favorite son who drowned in their backyard pool at the age of five or so, some thirty years ago. In the course of my research over a two year period I was told by others that this event so shattered this man's life that he was never the same - his business declined and his family relations became strained.

Generally speaking, the rozeh is an occasion when emotions are aroused and induced by the speaker whereby one can relate his trials and tribulations to a higher source. The collective expression of sorrow is a process of generalization whereby the personal, the immediate, the idiosyncratic difficulties of individuals are identified with the abstract, the timeless, the all-inclusiveness of Husain's sufferings and the divine protection of God.

The narrator not only emphasizes personal kinship ties but also the associational ties that bind one believing Muslim to another. He

generalizes from the feelings associated with local-level groupings to more inclusive groupings and formulates moral rules which govern such interaction. He also relates the consequences for society of the removal of key personnel[11] from the group by his analogy of the building made up of bricks, iron and plaster (section J). Once the natural, God-given order of society is tampered with then the total structure is in danger of collapse. Husain was killed and the very foundations of Shi'a Muslim society were weakened and in order to prevent the total collapse of the system through oppressive and unjust actions, it is necessary to resurrect the memory of Husain, to follow his example and oppose those forces of divisiveness and tyranny.

The metaphor of the building has essentially the same meaning in this context that the metaphor of the organism does to functional theorists, that is, a structure composed of various parts which are interrelated and which function together to maintain the integrity of the structure.

The narrator then uses a sexual metaphor in which the anklet is symbolic of purity and virtue. The removing of this anklet from a girl who is "under the protection of Islam" is symbolically equivalent to a Muslim girl being raped by a non-Muslim. The fact that she is stated as being "under the protection of Islam" implies an attack on the community

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[11] Key personnel are symbolized by iron beams which are the basic structural units holding up the structure. Iron, of course, symbolizes strength, something unbending (on page 318 it was mentioned that Husain does not bend to oppression).

as a whole, an attack on their honor and integrity by an outsider.[12] The threat to one's honor and integrity is again something to which each man in attendance can relate.

Kinship variables occur throughout the narration and are significant for various purposes in a complete, full interpretation depending on what sort of knowledge one wants. For example, the conflict between the "house of 'Ali" and the "house of Mo'avieh" can be seen as a conflict between the clan of Hashem to which Muhammad and his descendents belonged and the clan of Ummayah of which Uthman the third caliph, Mo'avieh and Yazid were the most notable members. Indeed, Watt (1961:165) stresses the fact that after the death of Muhammad "party interests were tending to follow the lines of the old clan rivalries." The Abbasid dynasty which eventually overthrew the Ummayad dynasty in ruling the Muslim world followed the Shi'a perspective somewhat in stating that the charisma of Muhammad belonged to the whole of the clan of Hashem and not solely to the descendents of Muhammad through his daughter Fatima as the Twelver Shi'a of Iran believe.[13] The Abbasids thus continued the rivalry between one clan and another albeit in much more encapsulating political terms. It was during the Abbasid period that the mythical elaboration of the drama of Husain began to take shape and it is possible to develop such clan-based kinship

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[12]The narrator may be making an historic reference here also, namely, to the practice of marriage by capture among pre-Islamic bedouins where girls might be carried off in war to become the wives or concubines of enemies (see Robertson-Smith 1885:279). Even so, the image of the threat to the integrity of the community still stands.

[13]The Abbasids were members of the clan of Hashem but collaterally rather than lineally related to Muhammad.

rivalries to such an extent that the whole of the drama of Husain could be seen from such a perspective as so many anthropologists have seen political and kinship rivalries reflected in myths (see Gluckman 1965:216-267). My informants were aware of the clan-based rivalries implicit in the drama of Husain but took them for granted and stressed only the broader implications of the conflict between those following the straight path as against those who were leading others astray. But what about the situation in contemporary Iran? Does the ritual performance of the drama of Husain have implications for the kinship system?

I noted earlier that the ideal family is modeled on that of the family of 'Ali and the reciprocal role relationships within the nuclear family are expected to follow this ideal pattern. Following the guidelines set out in the narration we can see that the "ideal" family should stick together and defend the honor of each of the others even if this results in death. Husain's group at Karbala was made up of members of his family including his half-brother 'Abbas and his nephew, Qassim, his sons Ali Akbar and Ali Asghar, his daughter, sister, Zaynab, and wife, Shahrbanu, plus some loyal supporters. Each of these relatives died defending the others, and, of course, for their belief in the Imamate of Husain.

Bilaterality is emphasized since the symbol of Fatima, the mother of Husain and daughter of Muhammad, is given equal if not greater prominence to that of 'Ali in the descent line of the Imams. In another narration the rozeh khan quoted Husain as saying to the enemy army opposing him at Karbala:

> Oh people! Remember my lineage. Mind who I am. Then consult your consciences and think if it is proper to kill me and destroy the holy line of my descent. Am I not the son of your prophet's daughter and the son of his cousin?

It is through Fatima that the barakat (spiritual power) of the prophet is passed on while 'Ali, the cousin of Muhammad, has an exalted position through this kinship link. Such a link is of great significance only to the Shi'a, however. In stressing bilateral descent it should be pointed out again that Zein ul-Abedin is "royal in his personage both from his paternal and his maternal sides." His paternal side includes his father Husain and thereby his grandmother Fatima, while on his maternal side, his mother was Shahrbanu, daughter of the last king of Iran prior to the Muslim conquest.

The role of women in the family and in society comes out clearly in the narrations. Women are expected to fulfill nurturing and supportive roles vis-à-vis the men. Sisters are expected to support their brothers and offer consolation and aid when necessary. Zaynab's role in opposing the tyranny of Yazid at Kufa by speaking out against him is played down by the present narrator but forms one of the major incidents in the narrations of other rozeh khans I have heard. Under certain conditions women too, are expected, to join in the opposition to tyranny and injustice.[14] Despite the often politically active role a woman may take in society under certain conditions the norm is one of restraint and negativism.

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[14]One informant proudly told me of an incident that occurred after the arrest of ayatullah Khomeini in 1963. Khomeini was held under house arrest in a suburb of Tehran "and there were many SAVAK agents nearby and nobody dared to there. But my aunts and my grandmother used to go there and say their prayers behind him. When they were prevented from entering they would say, 'We belong here, this is our house, we live here!' and the SAVAK agents would deny this saying, 'No, we haven't seen you before!' to which the women would answer, 'Yes we do' and would walk on into the house. They would go and say prayers behind ayatullah Khomeini and they were very happy about their actions." The informant was very proud of the bravery and brazenness of his relatives. The behavior of these women reflected on the men of the family and shows the kinds of roles women can play under such circumstances. Schuster (1912) also discusses the political role of women in Tehran during the Constitutional Revolution (pages 192-199).

In an earlier section of this study I quoted part of a narration which discussed the tortures of Imam Musa ibn Ja'far. In the earlier context I discussed the value of pious associations but the material from the narration can be used to portray the negative imagery of women presented through a narrative and ritual context.

The dancer who is sent to seduce Imam Musa described on page 108 is a prostitute. Members of the entertainment industry in Iran generally have a rather low status in society despite the fact that many of them are extremely wealthy.[15] Female entertainers especially, however, are equated with prostitutes. By association then, public entertainment is equivalent to lasciviousness, lustfulness (shahvatparasti) and concern for the pleasures of this world.

The figure of the dancer/prostitute stresses the attitude common to the bazaar tradesmen and religious leaders of the low status and role of women in society. Women are temptresses who lure men away from the Straight Path; they are the incarnation of evil who act in devious ways (unless they are constrained by men) to lure men to their physical and spiritual doom.[16]

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[15]One of my bazaar informants told me that his son, a boy of about seventeen, wanted to become an actor. He dropped out of high school and spent all of his free time at local theaters and getting bit-parts in plays. His family was so upset by this that they gave him a choice between acting or remaining in the household. He chose the former and was forbidden to enter the house again. He went to live with an older sister and her husband who, while not condoning his behavior, at least were more liberal in their views of such matters. The sister's husband found his brother-in-law a job at the same factory where he worked and the latter did his acting in his spare time.

[16]June Nash, in a discussion of the passion play in Maya Indian communities, notes that the evil figure of Judas (or Maximon as he is known locally) is the principal transgressor of sexual morality. ". . . he would transform himself into a woman and lure men into sexual relations after which they would die in three days" (1968:322).

It is interesting to note that the rozeh khan in the case study narration seems, in fact, to almost absolve Yazid of personal guilt by implying his actions were not totally his own fault since "He was warm towards women and consequently his reasoning diminished" - such are the personal and cosmic consequences of associating with women (see page 330).

The role of women as seductresses who lure men from the way of God is brought out in the Koran in the story of Adam and Eve and in the story of Yusuf (Joseph) and Zulaika, the wife of the Egyptian overseer. The story of Yusuf and Zuleika is a classic in Persian poetry and literature, especially in the version by Jami, one of the greatest Iranian poets and mystics. These stories, and other romantic-erotic folk stories such as Layli and Majnun, Farhad and Shirin, etc., which stress the seductive role of women, are part of the cognitive structure of the bazaar tradesmen. Those who attend the coffeehouses and listen to epic narrators (naqqal) are familiar with these stories and the story of the dancer/prostitute and Imam Musa ibn Ja'far fits well into this overall theme and the participants at the rozeh are able to relate the incident to other stories known to them, some of which have Koranic sanctioning.

Women who are not members of one's kin group are seen as sexually threatening and evil reflecting, perhaps, the Iranian male's apprehensiveness of sexual relations (see footnote 14 on page 70 ) and ambivalence about contact with the opposite sex. Women within one's kin group, especially mothers and sisters, are seen, on the other hand, as virtuous and emotionally supportive (note Zaynab's role in the chants and also the quote on page 406). Given the difficulties of heterosexual encounters prior to marriage, especially among the conservative and religiously-oriented, I

would not be surprised if there were incestuous overtones in the depiction of brother-sister, mother-son relations.[17]

Imam Musa's conversion of the prostitute in the narration affirms the fact that in real life men conquer and dominate women, good conquers evil and Right, thereby, prevails.[18] What is set up here in the narration is one further conceptual opposition - men/women; male/female - with each symbolically representative of values of greater transcendental significance than mere sex differences. It is through the mythical presentation of male/female relations that the narration relates human actions to an envisaged cosmic order and projects images of cosmic order onto the plane of human experience.

Males of the household are expected to defend the honor of their fathers, in the same way that Zein ul-Abedin spoke out despite the hostile forces around him in Damascus. Sons are also ideally expected to succeed their fathers occupationally and as head of the household upon the death of

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[17]Note Zaynab's statements in the chanting: "Oh dear brother, you are closer to Zaynab's soul than her body;" "My brother, we are so close to each other that there is not even the distance of a sigh between us." In a number of instances from my fieldnotes I have recorded cases of grown men sleeping in the same bed as the mother in the absence of a deceased father. Also a number of cases arose in relation to my questions why the informant doesn't marry. Responses were often not phrased in terms of economic difficulties but rather, "Why should I marry, my mother cooks for me and takes care of my needs. I am warm at home."

[18]In a French translation of one of the passion plays of Husain, Husain speaks to his sister Zaynab: "Oh my sister . . . the time has come for me to confess my faith. Listen to my last recommendations, oh thou who has suffered so much; listen with all your heart, oh my irreproachable sister. Do not tear your breast in your grief. <u>All women should put on the veil, which is the guardian of their chastity. May no man, apart from their family see their face</u> . . ." (Virolleaud 1950:61, italics mine).

the latter.[19] It is interesting to develop this idea even further since, at least as far as popular religion is concerned, Husain is without a doubt the preeminent figure. It would not be out of line, I believe, to stress the fact that Husain has symbolically deposed his father, 'Ali, in the popular mind. This must not be misunderstood since 'Ali still retains an extremely important place in Shi'a Islam, but it is not without significance that the most important religious event among the Shi'a is the martyrdom of Husain and not the death of 'Ali, who was also martyred by religio-political dissidents. It is Husain who represents the ethos of Shi'ism. In a sense, then, Husain is the embodiment of, as Eric Wolf phrased it in another context, "hope in a victorious outcome of the struggle between generations." Wolf continues: "This struggle leads to a further extension of the symbolism [of the Virgin of Guadalupe]. Successful rebellion against power figures is equated with the promise of life, defeat with the promise of death" (1965:229). In actual fact, Husain was not successful against the power figure of Yazid, he was killed and defeated as perhaps any overt protest against the father would be ideally put down. But Husain won a spiritual victory and perhaps in this sense the symbol of Husain epitomizes the "hope" of victory that Wolf speaks of in the conflict between generations.

One of the major themes of this study is the opposition between "traditionalism" and "modernization" or "westernization" which is reflected in the conflicts between the bazaar tradesmen and the edari. Basic to the

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[19] After the funeral service (khatm) of a tradesman, a procession moves from the mosque to the shop of the deceased where a brief reopening ceremony is held by his fellow-tradesmen and his son is "officially" recognized as the heir of the enterprise.

drama of Husain is the equation of Husain with the "traditionalists" and Yazid with the "modernists." The process of modernization has severe effects on generational differences. The members of the emerging "new" middle class by their activities and style of life exacerbate the changes taking place. On the one hand, traditional practices and religious sanctions exist and are observed, for the most part, by the older generations; on the other hand, the children of these men believe in a different scale of values and are obliged, under the pressures of economic and social change, to destroy traditions and create a new existence for themselves. One of the ways in which the newer generation displays its resentment against the older generation is by simply not attending ritual performances which the older generation feels are vital in social life. By not attending they indicate a number of things. First, they feel that the ritual performances are too stereotyped and redundant. They have heard it all and want something new from which they can learn something. Second, they are aware of the political significance of the ritual performances but feel that the government forces are too strong to combat through overt physical attack in the form of riots or demonstrations; and they also feel dissatisfied with the rhetorical manipulation of symbols and see it as ineffective and much like Don Quixote attacking a windmill. Those who are interested in the truths of Islam and politics are increasingly not interested in pursuing political goals through religious channels but are increasingly joining political parties and the government bureaucracy with the hope of being able to implement some of the principles of Islam. Still others, who are also religiously-oriented, work through religious channels but in a new way, such as establishing publishing houses to publish new types of religious books with the aim of resocializing the young away from

traditional interpretations of doctrine and developing a more relevant religious system.[20] In pursuing these activities they indicate their resentment of the power, respect and authority of the older generation. In short, the antagonism between native and foreign cultural practices and ideas which is seen so clearly in the multivocality of the symbols of the drama of Husain are not merely reflective of political ideologies between bazaar tradesmen and an oppressive government, but also reflect the underlying differences between the generations which I discussed in the first part of this study. In actuality, Yazid wins and modernization also appears to be "winning," but wish-fulfillment carried over in the drama of Husain signifies hope for the older generation of the victory of the old over the new; the established over the innovative; of Good over Evil.

Ritual Mourning

Much of the discussion between the Shi'a and Sunni ulama on the ship from Mecca concerns the social and symbolic significance of weeping and self-flagellation. In fact, this becomes the major theme of the narration. At this point I would like to investigate this problem more fully.

The rozeh khan,in the interview after the narration, explicitly mentions that he makes decisions regarding rhetorical style and the choice of words in order to make the participants cry. But why? What is the function of weeping and self-flagellation in this religious context?

At a very obvious level of analysis weeping is a symbolic gesture indicating remorse, sadness, distress and anguish. Weeping, if it does not

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[20] See my "The Bazaar as a Case Study of Religion and Social Change" in E. Yar-Shater (ed.), Iran Faces the Seventies, N.Y., Praeger, 1971 for a further discussion of some of these religious changes.

arise from personal, physical pain, is an empathetic gesture which conveys to others in a social situation one's sincerity and depth of feeling for others. Weeping is in Iran, and other societies as well, perhaps one of the most dramatic ways in which a person can exhibit his empathy and sense of solidarity with others. Implicit in the idea of solidarity is devotedness to a mutually understood cultural system and pattern of values which structure reciprocal obligations. weeping then, is not so much an individual, idiosyncratic action, but rather one which is constrained by a shared recognition of stimuli for culturally specified purposes. It is a group phenomenon, a social action.

The cultural pattern on which the mourning for Husain is based is that of a funeral. That is, the rozeh is the essential equivalent of a funeral service (khatm) in which friends, acquaintances, kinsmen and supporters gather to pay their respects to the dead and listen to eulogies of praise from a religious leader. As has been pointed out by Radcliffe-Brown, Parsons and others, the gathering together in time of bereavement directly symbolizes the belongingness of the deceased and of the bereaved in larger social groupings. The overall tone of the funeral ceremony is a message not for the deceased so much as it is for the bereaved. The message states, in effect, that the traditional values of the society must be upheld and the living must go on despite the interruption of death. Of course, the death of a key figure in that system does disrupt the system, as I indicated earlier, and some mechanism must be established to keep his message alive.

Since Husain died in battle and his head was severed and taken as a trophy by the enemy to Damascus, the Shi'a believe his family, who were taken as prisoners, were not able to give him the proper funeral which is

necessary for a believing Muslim. On 'Ashura, the tenth of Muharram and the date of Husain's death, the ritual ceremonies are funeral services for Husain and his followers. Special verses from the Koran are recited for the dead, such as the fateheh (opening chapter of the Koran), which is believed to help pass the soul of the deceased on to the next world (fateheh miferestand baraye shadi-yi ruh-i Imam Husain). Halva is prepared as are other foods, sweets or fruits, which comprise part of the ritual preparations of a funeral.

As part of the overall funeral services a procession (dasteh) takes place to carry the body of the deceased to its final resting place. It is considered religiously meritorious (savab) for a Muslim to walk at least seven steps behind a funeral procession, and even more merit accrues to the individual who helps to support the bier or the body. Most Muslim men at the very least try to touch the body as evidence of their effort to carry it and thereby acquire merit. During 'Ashura ritual processions (dasteh) take place in the bazaar in which a bier containing the "body" of Husain is usually carried through the streets. I say "usually" because such a bier was not carried in the processions that occurred during field work from 1967-1969. However, when I was in Iran in 1962 during Muharram there were very elaborate ritual processions in which a simulated body covered with real blood was carried through the bazaar on the shoulders of numerous individuals. Husain's horse, Zeljoshan, elaborately regaled but riderless, followed. In the procession were a number of riders dressed in Arab costumes and one rider carried a small infant of not more than a year, who was wrapped in several windings of Arab style clothing (the temperature was in the mid-nineties) and covered with blood. From the child's neck

protruded, in very realistic fashion, an arrow obviously to represent the death of Husain's infant son 'Ali asghar who had been killed at Karbala. This part of the procession was extremely realistic and had an almost eerie quality about it. Following the bier and these dramatizations were groups of men and boys dressed in black.

At the forefront of each group banners were held up identifying the particular group. In 1962 some of the groups represented villages and other districts around Tehran in addition to the asnaf groupings. During field work (1967-69) I saw no banners depicting groups outside of the bazaar and all banners represented various of the senf of the bazaar. Most senf groupings were composed of young boys ranging in age from six or so up to fifteen or sixteen. These boys made up the first ten to twenty rows of participants. Still within the same group, but following behind the boys, were the men of the senf. Some groups were quite large, while others were smaller in size. Usually two boys held the banner while some others, including men, carried embroidered flags depicting scenes from the battle at Karbala. Young men stood on either side of the boys keeping them in line and ensuring their religious participation, although most were clowning around by laughing, smiling and exaggerated chanting. The men restrained them from any undue childish behavior, however. At the forefront of each group was a member of the senf who acted as a leader of the chants (known as a murshed, literally a spiritual guide, usually used in reference to a sufi mystic who guides devotees on the right spiritual path). The murshed knows the various marsieh (elegies, lamentations) and madiheh (eulogies of praise) as well as other chants which he teaches to the members of the senf at the various rozeh gatherings held throughout the year, but especially

in the weeks preceding Muharram. He tells them what to say, when to say it and keeps up the tempo of the chant and the rhythm of the flagellations. One informant told me that the murshed for the sineh-zani gets paid for his teaching efforts, although I was not able to confirm this. The chanting often takes the form of an antiphony. An antiphonal response occurs when the group is divided into two parts with one group, or perhaps the leader, asking a question and the other group responding in unison. In the case of the dasteh, the murshed often chanted a question or made a statement to which the senf as a whole responded in unison.

The dasteh originates at a number of rozeh gatherings in the bazaar at which the participants have been "worked up" by the narrator. When the participants proceed through the bazaar in the dasteh procession they are already quite emotional and intense. The procession of each senf proceeds from the rozeh gathering (or several different ones) to a main staging area. In the bazaar of Tehran this is usually the Shah Mosque. From there the procession proceeds through the various entrances and exits of the mosque to the bazaars, culminating at the home (homes) of pious individuals of the senf (the phrase motamed-i senfi is used, meaning "reliable, dependable, trustworthy people of the senf"), who provide lunch for the participants.

All of the members of the senf that participate in the dasteh processions flagellate themselves. This means that not all the members of the senf take part in the processions, but rather those who favor this kind of emotional activity, as I indicated earlier. Other members of the senf

do different things on this day.[21] Some attend special prayer sessions in the homes of pious tradesmen of the senf. There are special prayers for 'Ashura which are believed to be especially efficacious in obtaining wishes. It is believed these wishes will be definitely granted to participants in such prayer sessions. There are also some non-religious reasons why people would rather attend prayer sessions than participate in the processions:

> I am one of the people who, for the past few years, go to the home of one of my friends for saying prayers on 'Ashura. It is a very safe and secure environment. Of course by the time the agha (religious leader) comes and says the group prayer (namaz-i jama'at) it will be 1:00 p.m. There are not usually too many people at gatherings of this type since not very many people are willing to come from early morning until afternoon to say prayers and read the Koran for 'Ashura. The owner of the house usually gives lunch for people who are there. He will be very nice to people and the guests will have a very nice time.

Another informant discussing change in the bazaar commented:

> As modern ideas are introduced to the bazaar things like sineh-zani (chest-beating rituals) will gradually disappear. Sineh-zani is forbidden (haram) in Islam and they know it too. They make up these things themselves; they think it is meritorious (savab) but they don't know about the basis of Islam. Right now the majority of bazaaris are doing these things. Once agaye Shahrestani [a religious leader] came to Tehran and said these things are not right. The shopkeepers booed him and wouldn't let him speak. Little by little, however, as they become more enlightened they will understand better.

Here, obviously is a man who feels that he has a higher level of religious

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[21] Television is available in Tehran and during Muharram there are televised passion plays (ta'ziyah) which a number of informants told me they watched rather than participate in dasteh processions or attend other types of gatherings the morning of 'Ashura, although they did attend such gatherings later in the evening. There is also T.V. coverage of the mourning ceremonies at the Sepahsalar mosque which is attended by the Shah and other government officials.

understanding than someone who practices self-flagellation. Such "levels of understanding" are in accord with the distinction, already pointed out in an earlier chapter, that all bazaaris make vis-à-vis one another and outsiders in the course of their daily interaction.

The rozeh and luncheon gatherings on 'Ashura as well as the weekly rozeh and hay'at gatherings during the year, are evaluated by the participants in rather subtle terms. That is, the prestige and relative power and influence of a given person sponsoring a rozeh or hay'at are demonstrated by the care with which he organizes the gathering and the number and importance of people in attendance. As one informant noted:

> If someone gives a better tea, this will indicate his good taste. . . . Some people give breakfast, that means he may give the best lavash bread [a type of unleavened bread] which is whiter than lilac, with butter - each cube being fifty grams - and with jam. Others may give eggs with butter and jam, bread, cheese, milk and sweet tea. Someone else may give just sangak bread with cheese and tea.[22]

There is no ostentation nor real elaborateness in providing the minimal food served at such gatherings, rather prestige is evaluated in the minute aspects of what is served and how, that is, the degree to which the guests are seen as welcome and "entertained." The number and quality of carpets which are used to cover the area of the gathering are taken notice of, as are such seeming trivia as whether ice cream, which may be served to individuals at some of these weekly gatherings, is served in glass containers or paper cups. The serving of ice cream itself is somewhat prestigious since it costs more than the traditional refreshments such as

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[22] In the value system of Tehran and the bazaar, sangak bread has a somewhat lower prestige value than lavāsh bread, although both are the same price.

sharbat (a drink made of sugar water with fruit flavoring) or paludeh (mashed fruits such as cantaloupe mixed with water and served with a spoon).[23] The following poem, quoted by Browne (1959:185), provides a clear and "native" conception of these gatherings.

> Now hear from me a story which is more brightly colored
> than a garden flower,
> Of those who make mourning for Husayn and sit in
> assemblies in frenzied excitement.
> All wear black for Fatima's darling,
> Establish houses of mourning and make lament for
> the King of Karbala.
> In every corner they prepare a feast and arrange a
> pleasant assembly;
> They carpet court-yard and chamber, they bedeck with
> inscriptions arch and alcove;
> They spread fair carpets, they set out graceful
> furnishings;
> A host of gluttonous men, all beside themselves and
> intoxicated with the cup of greed,
> On whom greed has produced such an effect that, like
> the stamp of the gold,[24]
> It has set its mark on their foreheads, make enquiry
> about such assemblies.
> One of them says, 'O comrades, well-approved friends,
> versed in affairs,
> 'I and Hajji Abbas went yesterday to the entertainment
> of that green-grocer fellow.
> 'In that modest entertainment there was nothing but tea
> and coffee,
> 'And we saw no one there except the host and one or two
> rawza khwans.
> 'To sit in such an assembly is not meet, for without
> sugar and tea it has no charm,
> 'God is not pleased with that servant in whose entertain-
> ment is neither sherbet nor sugar.
> 'But, by Him who gives men and jinn their daily bread,
> in such and such a place is an entertainment worthy
> of kings,

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[23]When it is realized that usually several hundred people participate in rozeh gatherings, the cost can be considerable.

[24]That is, its trace is ineffaceably stamped upon them.

'A wonderfully pleasant and comfortable entertainment,
which, I am sure, is devoid of hypocrisy.
'There is white tea and sugar-loaf of Yazd in place
of sugar,
'And crystal qalyans [water-pipes] with flexible tubes,
at the gargle of which the heart rejoices.
'The fragrance of their tobacco spreads for miles, and
the fire gleams on their heads like [the star]
Canopus.
'No water will be drunk there, but draughts of lemon,
sugar and snow.
'One of the reciters is Mirza Kashi, who, they say, is
the chief of rawza-khwans.
'Another of them is the rhapsodist of Rasht, who is like
a boat in the ocean of song.
'From Kirman, Yazd and Kirmanshah, from Shiraz, Shustar
and Isfahan,
'All are skilled musicians of melodious and charming
voices: they are like the kernal and others like
the shell.
'In truth it is a wonderful entertainment, devoid of
hypocrisy: by your life it is right to attend it!'
When the friends hear this speech with one accord they
assemble at that banquet.

As can be gathered, this is a satirical poem on the Muharram gatherings in which the "ostentation of the host and the greed of the guests is satirized with some pungency. The . . . lines describe how the word is passed around as to whose entertainment is likely to prove most satisfactory to the guests" (Browne op. cit. 182).

The dasteh processions are declining in frequency (informants told me that just a few years before field work, there used to be processions also on the commemorative date of 'Ali's death) partly due to a recognition on the part of many bazaaris that such practices reflect badly on Iranians, and partly because such practices are disruptive of social order.

Little by little rozeh khani [narrations] and sineh-
zani [chest-beating, flagellations] are becoming less.
It is obvious that people used to go too far in this
respect in the past. It isn't becoming for Iran, which
is growing up, to have such a thing in front of
foreigners. That is why the police would prevent any
kind of demonstrations and disorder. In the past

> [i.e., recent past], people from sangalaj [a quarter of Tehran] would fight with people from maydan [possibly chaleh maydan, also a quarter in the city] with broadswords (qadareh) or sticks and they would injure each other. That is why the government prevented all this.[25]

Increasingly also, the bazaaris are moving from one level of religious awareness to another, in bazaari terms they are becoming more "enlightened" (roshanfekr). In discussing this concept with informants the reference was, at times, to the greater spread of secular education and therefore a de-emphasis on religion; while in other contexts the use of the same word "roshanfekr" had reference to a movement from somewhat superstitious practices to a more introspective religious orientation. Note for example, the following:

> Mourning for Husain has always been in the process of expansion and transformation depending on the condition of the time and the process of thinking and the situation of the shi'a. Some of these forms are lawful (mashru') and satisfactory to the original founder and others are deviating (atrāfi) and superstitious (kharāfi) (Introduction to Goftar-i 'Ashura 1963:3).

Aside from the changes that are occurring within the bazaar itself in the practices of the Muharram mourning ceremonies, the fact remains that the government does not wish disorder and the eruption of frenzied behavior which might result in loss of life. During field work the aunt (mosi) of one of my bazaar informants had died. She was the wife of a well-known and respected religious leader who lived in the bazaar area. It is customary that the body of the deceased be taken to a mortuary for the washing of the dead and other purificatory rituals. In recent years, the body is usually

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[25] On urban factionalism in Iran see Lambton (1954:15-17).

taken by ambulance, but in this case the mourners wanted to follow traditional practices and carry the body on their shoulders through the bazaar to the mortuary.

Large crowds of mourners gathered at the home of the deceased and soon after a large contingent of police arrived and told the mourners they could not move the body through the bazaar in a traditional procession. There was a great deal of tension and arguing with the police who, meanwhile, had ordered an ambulance. When the ambulance arrived, the mourners tried to prevent the body from being put inside. The body itself was pushed from side to side and jostled in the commotion and crowded conditions and at one point dropped slightly, just barely touching the ground. At this, the crowd became wild and a near riot broke out. My informant, the nephew of the deceased, lay on the ground in front of the ambulance to prevent it from moving away. Finally, after a rather concerted use of force and some attempts at mediation between the conflicting groups, the mourners gave in and the body was taken away in the ambulance. My informant later told me that his kinship group gave in to the police out of respect for the deceased and other relatives since as the body was being buffeted about the kinsmen, especially the women, were terribly distraught and almost hysterical with grief. They could not bear the disrespect to the dead any longer so they gave in. The police, having no emotional involvement, had nothing to lose by pursuing the matter. This is, of course, only one of the many small examples that clearly show the hostility that exists between the government rules and their implementation on the one hand, and the traditionally-oriented, religious behavior of the tradesmen of the bazaar on the other.

During a funeral there is a cultural provision for violent behavior

(at least to a certain degree). Members of a mourning group are permitted to give themselves over to wailing, screaming, shouting, the flailing of arms and beating of heads and breasts, tearing of clothing, fainting and even, to some extent, aggressiveness. All of these actions are culturally constituted signs of devotion, sorrow and filial piety for the deceased. As our narrator had said, however, "the feeling of sorrow increases or decreases in different circumstances." We can clearly see how these emotions associated with a normal funeral can be transferred to Husain when his death is being commemorated.[26]

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[26]It might be pointed out here that some individuals at commemorative gatherings pretend to cry and weep. Note the following comments:

> . . . half of them go there to pretend and also to spend their time. The other half are mostly old women and they don't have anything else to do so they go there and spend their time and have fun (tafrih). At the same time, if they have a problem they get it off their chests. If they feel like crying, they go there to cry and also talk about it to each other.
>
> Some of the women at a rozeh really cry, of course, and have good intentions and, well, they are simple (sadeh) and believe easily. But some of them pretend and they are hypocrites.

These comments were made by several wives of bazaar tradesmen to my wife about women who attend rozehs. Informants told me they often try to induce weeping by thinking of something sad (presumably more personal than Husain's plight). Others said they often felt guilty about not being able to cry and would put saliva under their eyes to simulate tears or would pinch themselves hard or prick themselves with a pin in order to weep. It is clear that weeping is expected of people at a rozeh. It is a behavior pattern than indicates belief in the sense that Firth notes that practice is the test of religious conformity (1964:241). Beliefs are inferred from people's actions. In addition, when you have a symbol that is not only religious but also represents the nationalistic hopes and aspirations of a group, weeping indicates conformity to the religio-political values of the bazaar. Weeping clearly singles out individuals at a gathering who presumably can be counted on for support of one kind or another. It should also be noted that informants distinguished between sincere weeping which is done in a discrete manner and insincere weeping which is done in a

In Empire's Children, Foster discusses similar kinds of cultural determinants that structure the reaction of the participants at the Holy Week commemorations of Christ's trial, death and removal from the cross.

> Father Tovar recites the story of Calvary, and then two men mount the ladders, simultaneously taking the spikes out of the arms, allowing them to fall grotesquely. The spikes are taken out of the feet and the body is lowered to waiting arms which take it to the bier where it is stretched out and covered. As the body is to be lowered, the women and a few men break into a loud wailing. This grows louder and louder and reaches its climax as the body is carried to the bier. The faithful say that they can clearly see the sweat and blood running down Christ's face, and weep for his suffering. I glance around and see the tears flowing copiously from the red eyes of Natividad. The din is almost ear splitting. Altogether it is a remarkable psychological manifestation, and many of the women undoubtedly feel real grief (1948:213).

The weeping and wailing is clearly a crowd-conditioned phenomenon. There is also some degree of selectivity in perception and cognition whereby the "faithful" believe they see Christ's sweat and blood, i.e., he becomes alive. In our narration, the rozeh khan also makes references to the blood of Husain flowing at the gathering (section T) and to miracles occurring whereby the faithful could see the lips of the severed head of Husain speak to them (section JJ, line6), see also the section entitled zikr later in this chapter for further insights on this problem.

From the foregoing, it is clear that crowd behavior under conditions of ritualized mourning will be characterized by a shared recognition of stimuli which induce culturally specified responses. Not all individuals participating in the ritual will be affected in the same manner by these

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"vulgar, ostentatious" way. This was said specifically in reference to mourning at a funeral but the distinction no doubt applies to other forms of religious behavior as well as evidenced by the bazaaris' conceptions of tazahor (pretense) and riah (hypocrisy) in relation to religious behavior.

stimuli. Some, due perhaps to personal idiosyncracies, will respond with a greater outpouring of emotions than will others. It should also be pointed out that the behavior observed at these ritual performances will not occur in the absence of a crowd. Spooner has noted, for example, that the emotional frenzy associated with the Husain rituals "is impressive, at times almost terrifying and reminiscent of Jung's theory that 'when many people gather together to share one common emotion, the total psyche emerging from the group is below the level of the individual psyche'" (1963:91).

Ritual Efficacy of Tears

I have noted that one gains religious merit (savab) for participating in a funeral service and procession. It has also been noted that one gains merit also when one cries for Husain. Not only does one gain merit, however, but the tears themselves, as our narrator points out, act to purify the soul in the same way that ritually purified water (ab-i kor) can act to purify a polluted object. While some degree of allegory is perhaps intended, informants I have interviewed do take the speaker's words at their face value. That is, the participants do believe that tears have, as it were, such a "magical" effect.

Weeping, perhaps through the psychological mechanism of catharsis, undoubtedly has a purging, purifying or "cathartic" effect on the individual. Perhaps because of this fact the participants can legitimately believe in the efficacy of the tear as the equivalent of ritually purifying water. This would seem to be similar to Cannon's view that when one has a deep-seated belief in the death-dealing efficacy of witchcraft certain psycho-physiological processes occur which do indeed bring about death. The belief is then vindicated by the action (1965:321-327). In another context, at a

sofreh hazrat-i 'Abbas, the rozeh khan was asking Husain to cure the sick and alleviate everyone's pain. In doing so, he invoked the "tears of Zaynab's eyes, the tears of the eyes of Fatima's children" as support for Husain's curative powers.

> Daniel [speaking of 'Ashura night] says "They believe the observance of that night is absolute remission of sins; that the gates of heaven are open to all believers for the sake of the martyrs. Some pious Moslems preserve the tears of that night in small bottles, as it is believed they will cure disease when applied to the brows of sick men. These tears are prized as a most holy relic" (1901:119).

Water is, of course, the usual means of ritual cleanliness in Islam associated primarily with the required ablutions of the daily prayers. The Koran also refers to the purifying aspects of water where it states that God "sent down upon you water from the clouds that he might thereby purify you and take away from you the defilement of Satan" (Sura 8:11). And to this I would add the comments of Mircea Eliade:

> Breaking up all forms, doing away with the past, water possesses this power of purifying, of regenerating, of giving new birth. . . . Water purifies and regenerates because it nullifies the past, and restores - even if only for a moment - the integrity of the dawn of things (1966:161 quoted by Mary Douglas).

Tears then, accomplish a number of ends. Tears are a visible sign of belief and show, thereby, one's support of the just cause of the Imams. Tears also have an individual, cathartic effect of purification - of nullifying the past and one's deviant actions and sins. The act of purification (weeping) also puts one thereby in a "sacred" condition, a pure condition in which the individual is ready to accept, wholeheartedly, the message of Husain.

Weeping itself, as a phenomenon, is a negative action.[27] Weeping implies distress or misfortune which further connotes Disorder and, as we saw earlier, Disorder is the polar opposite of Order and hence conjures up a sense of Orderliness. That is, again applying Burke's ideas of the negative to my data, weeping as a negative conception implies by its very existence, its opposite. Thus, it can be said that in Husain's defeat and death is victory. The message of Husain is paradoxical for it says, among other things, that it is only through obedience that man may find freedom. By Husain's obedience to the faith of Islam he found death and hence ultimate freedom and salvation. He became, because of his actions, a Redeemer and Mediator, one who has the exclusive privilege of making intercession on behalf of all sinners (see quote p. 264).

The narrator himself develops his ideas along similar, negative-positive lines. In section P he notes that Zahra (Fatima) was constantly crying after the death of the Prophet.

> Zahra was crying because she wanted to show and tell people that now that the Prophet was gone his orders are going too. With her crying, she was asking the people not to let the Prophet die and get destroyed - not to let the Prophet's order get destroyed. She was working in a negative way. With her crying she was proving the Truth of her father . . . Zahra cried in order to prove that tyranny is defeated and Truth is victorious. . . . The Shi'a cry and moan until they can make the world understand that tyranny is defeated and justice is victorious (italics mine).

Thus, weeping as a negative action, is also a positive action. Its

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[27] I recognize, of course, that weeping may also symbolize joy or happiness such as is shown by the expression "tears of joy." But in the present social context and in the association of weeping with death, suffering and sorrow, I view weeping as an essentially negative action.

negation implies the negating of something and that something is positive. In death is victory (see the quote of Ibn Babawayhi on p.267). Historically, the evil forces of Yazid win on the battlefield - Husain and all of his followers are killed. This is a recognized fact of life. The impious and unjust often succeed, as Geertz pointed out earlier. In this sense the realities of social life and the drama of Husain complement each other; they are linked in such a way as to mutually confirm one another. The drama of Husain is, in this sense, a symbolic backdrop against which experience is compared and in the comparison the myth of Husain is rendered true and the experience given transcendental validation. The ultimate victory, that of obtaining salvation in the after-life, of course, belongs to Husain and his followers. But even in this world, Husain's forces overcome the enemy - at least symbolically - in that the injustice, haughtiness, licentiousness and oppression of the government of Yazid are held up for all to see and condemn. By being objectified, made manifest, such actions are compared with those of Husain and resolutely condemned.

The imagery of death abounds in the narrations of the Imams and death is, of course, a primary symbol of transition in rites of passage. The fact that Husain was not given a proper funeral at his death stresses his liminal state - i.e., he is symbolically betwixt and between this world and the afterworld. His ambiguous and indeterminate status is constantly lamented and the annual rituals of Muharram are funeral rites performed to enable him to make the transition, to pass from the one realm into the other.

In discussing the attributes of liminal entities Turner notes that the focus is upon the powers of the weak - "In liminality the underling comes

uppermost" (1969b:102). Husain and the other Imams are "physically" weak in that they do not command political or military power. They are not able to assert their rights by force of arms. The Imams, then, are physically weak but morally strong whereas Yazid and the caliphs - those in positions of political and military power - are physically strong but morally weak and corrupt. Again, we have an opposition of binary categories.

The weeping for Husain and the Imams is a public demonstration that something is wrong. The commemoration of the deaths of the Imams and especially Husain are rituals symbolizing society's rebellion against oppression, tyranny and injustice at a metaphysical level as well as in this world. Because of the multivocality of the symbol of weeping, it arouses empathy and sympathy, and when these are coupled with explicit requests for help put in the mouth of Husain by the narrators, it becomes a call to action. The drama of Husain incites men to action as well as to contemplation.

Zikr

The ritualized mourning at rozeh gatherings is known to the participants as zikr-i mosibat-i imam (i.e., "commemoration of an Imam's tragical event"). The word zikr is originally Arabic and has a number of meanings in Persian, all of which are related, such as "mention," "remembering," "recital" and "commemorate." What is of interest to me here is that the term zikr is also used by Sufi or mystic groups to characterize their rituals of ecstatic communion with the Divine. In this context the "recital" definition of zikr seems predominant for the Sufi devotees rhythmically recite the name of God or some other word or phrase over and over again until they reach a state of ecstasy in which the devotee is able to perceive God and interact with,

and even unite himself to, the deity. In short, the goal is to seek immediate and subjective contact with that which is transcendent.

As we have seen, the participants at a rozeh (and also during the dasteh procession on the tenth of Muharram) become emotionally involved in the sufferings of the Imam and as the gathering nears an end the participants begin the rhythmic chanting of certain phrases and engage in chest-beating culminating in the incessant chanting of Husain! Husain! Husain! The particular musical mode of the chants changes frequently as does the frequency and rapidity of the chest-beating. The rhythmic chantings, the rhythmic motions of the body and the beatings seem to affect the pattern of breathing and induce a psych-physiologic response which produces a state of excitement, ecstasy and possibly a mild form of trance (see Haas 1943; Lewis 1971). At almost every rozeh and dasteh I attended I recall seeing individuals whose eyes were "glassy" and who were obviously "not here." Some of these men were limp from exhaustion and had to be carried by others in the dasteh procession while still others had worked themselves into a violent frenzy and had to be restrained by others from harming themselves. There is a sort of contagion which an observer feels in being in a situation of this sort whereby his own emotions are aroused not by the objective raison d'être of the ritual but rather by the emotional actions of the participants themselves. It is difficult to explain, but the feeling is there nonetheless. Other anthropologists like Marvin Opler and Emerys Peters have also referred to the Muharram rituals as "a moving experience" (see p. 277). The zikr-i mosibat is also one way of satisfying certain physiological and psychological needs, of relaxing the nervous system and relieving emotional anxieties, while merging oneself with a group of persons of equal status and in a similar condition.

In order for participants to "change themselves" at the Club for the Dissemination of the Message of Husain, to "throw out the badness and put away ugly actions" it is necessary not only to shed tears, but also to create a situation of transition. That is, for a participant to transform himself and become like Husain it is necessary that the "transient" become separated from the rest of society, to somehow place himself apart until he can be inducted into this new state of being. This liminal phase of the ritual is a condition of being in which all restraints are cast off, the participant is temporarily subject to no rules at all (see Van Gennep 1960:65ff). As Turner says, "Liminal entities are neither here nor there; they are betwixt and between the positions assigned and arrayed by law, custom, convention, and ceremonial" (1969:95). The weeping, sobbing, flailing and state of ecstasy evoke the antithesis of the normal human condition, of the orderliness of social life. It is a condition of no obligation. As a state of no obligation, it approaches the idea of salvation or, perhaps better, redemption. The ecstasy achieved during a rozeh is a temporary state of redemption in this world, a foretaste of that otherworldly redemption which also is presumed to be a condition of unobligedness or release from all obligations. The ecstatic condition is, therefore, an emancipation from the attachment to this world and the restrictions of society. Having no rules can be profitable as well as relaxing. Burridge notes, for example:

> . . . since it is difficult for a political regime to reason with those who do not consider themselves bound by rules, it is usually during this phase of no rules, that, in the colonial situation, an outraged administration feels bound to take action. So too in other instances. Order cannot countenance disorder (1969: 168).

Thus, as I have noted throughout this study, most violent demonstrations against the government take place during Muharram when the bazaar tradesmen have been emotionally aroused and therefore in a condition of "no obligation."

The participants at a rozeh seek, through the zikr, interaction with Husain much as the Sufi mystic seeks, through his zikr, interaction with God. The fact that participants believe they achieve such interaction is evidenced by the words and phrases used by the participants in their ecstatic condition.[28]

There is also an element of spiritual or mental visitation in these ecstatic rituals whereby, through the ritual, the participants believe they

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[28]There is an interesting element of role reversal here, as I indicated in the text. That is, the participants speak, in the ecstatic state, as if they were Zaynab, Husain's sister. During the performance of the passion play (ta'ziya) women do not participate and men perform the roles of the women in Husain's party (Zaynab, Shahrbanu and also his mother Fatima who appears as a spirit). Some women informants, in speaking with my wife, criticized such practices in the ta'ziya by saying "men have half a kilo of things hanging down [testicles and penis] and they play Fatima." Their criticisms seem related to a general disrespect for women displayed by the men and also the idea of the "dirtiness" of sex (the male sex) in relation to the purity of Fatima. (See Gluckman 1965:216ff'g.; also Norbeck 1963, Turner 1969b and Marriott 1966 for discussions of role reversal and the sociological implications of such actions.)

It might be noted also that one other element associated with the role reversal idea associated with Zaynab is the fact that she is perceived by Shi'a Muslims as the Great Sufferer. At one ritual gathering the narrator quoted Zaynab as saying, "Don't call me Zaynab, know me as the sufferer of all time" [mara mehnat kesheh duran bedanid]. She epitomizes one who has lost kinsmen, prestige (she was humiliated, as granddaughter of the Prophet by being taken as prisoner) and a religious guide, an Imam - in the person of Husain. "I, Zaynab, have lost my brother. I have suffered oppression: [zolm]."

are transported spiritually to the presence of Husain. The idea of spiritual or mental visitations is very common in Shi'ism for it is believed possible for true believers to annihilate both time and space and transport themselves anywhere they wish (see Corbin 1966, 1970). At a sofreh hazrat-i 'Abbas (that is, a gathering held to give thanks for a wish fulfilled or at which requests are made), for example, the rozeh khan tried to evoke an emotional aura at the gathering through the narration of a rozeh about Husain. After he succeeded in arousing the participants' emotions, he continued:

> Let us think about the spiritual connotation [of this meeting]. Right now, think to yourselves that you are sitting in the tomb [haram] of hazrat-i abu fazl ['Abbas]. I can swear by the owner of this sofreh that right now you are sitting in his shrine [haram]. Why? Because all the learned men [ulama] believe that distance to a destination is not a criterion in the traveling of a rohani [i.e., spiritual person also a religious leader]. Don't ever think you are far from Karbala! Don't ever think that the shrine of abu fazl is not within your reach! If you haven't had a chance to go there [it is in Iraq] that has nothing to do with now. But right now you should concentrate your thoughts around sofreh hazrat-i abu fazl. <u>You should accept that you are in the shrine of abu fazl. Oh! Oh! This is the shrine, this is the holy shrine</u> [women weeping and shouting]. If you have needs, if you have a problem, or you have a sick person or any other things . . . [didn't finish his sentence]. I don't know what is in each person's heart. I think everyone has a problem and some unhappiness, but it is not possible that we return hopeless from the house of abu fazl. It is not possible at all. Well, now I have to prove it to you, but ladies, as I said before, if you will wait until we get closer to the sunset, until this eastern ray of life disappears from the room of the sky, then the door to the mercy of God opens up to us. We have a hadith that those who have problems, debts or any other unhappy feelings, if on Thursday evening they approach the sight of God with one of the prayers, God will never let them down.

Burke, discussing the ideas of Pascal, notes that the Catholic Mass is a reenactment of Christ's sacrifice and, to believing Catholics, Christ

is present.

> It is the Crucifixion, which in this sense is not a temporal event at all, but simply an unchanging moment in the logic of the Christian nomenclature (1961:251, Burke's italic).

Pascal (vide Burke) opposes this position to what he considers the heresy of Luther - namely, that the Crucifixion was an event that took place at one particular point in history and the Mass, as celebrated now, is nothing more than a commemoration of a past event. The view of the participants at a sofreh hazrat-i 'Abbas and a rozeh, etc., is somewhere in between these views. It is clear, I think, that the participants feel and believe they are in the presence of 'Abbas or Husain in the same way that Christ is present in the Mass. But the ritual remembrance is not the original event itself, mystically transformed to the present, but is rather a remembrance, a commemoration of the religious message which Husain and the other Imams represent. In a sense also, there is immortality in the ritual remembrance of a name over time. So long as the participants at a rozeh can recall Husain by name, they are also recalling the quality of his personality and the message associated with his name. In this sense, Husain is still with the participants "in spirit," but in an additional sense, he is believed to be there in actual spirit. The participants speak to him through his sister, Zaynab!

## The Rozeh as a Rite of Purification

The tears that are shed by the participants at a rozeh are further symbolic of a sense of guilt for having committed actions which go against the principles of Islam. People, being human, are constantly liable to sin and guilt but such actions can be erased by good actions, actions which purge

and purify.[29] As I view it, the weekly hay'at gatherings and in particular the rozehs can be seen partly as rites of purification or expiatory rituals. The gatherings provide an opportunity for good works, actions which purify the soul and gain the participants a store of merits. The narrator himself sees the "Club for the Dissemination of the Message of Husain" as a gathering in which participants can "throw out the badness," "put away ugly actions" and cleanse themselves with tears for Husain. In the rituals of self-flagellation there is physical punishment. Insofar as punishment is a kind of payment for wrong, we can see flickering about the edges of the idea of punishment the idea of redemption. To "pay" for one's wrongdoing by suffering punishment is to "redeem" oneself, to cancel one's "debt," to ransom or "buy back" (I would like to draw the reader's attention here to these commercial terms which are, as I indicated elsewhere, inherent in the world view of Islam). In an article on "Mystics and Merchants in Fourteenth Century Germany" James Peacock makes a similar point when he says

> Scattered facts suggest that many of these sinners were moneyed burghers. It is said that burghers gave the monks alms, property and the like in exchange for the monks' intercession before the Father for the sins of the burghers (1969:57).[30]

Among the Shi'a tradesmen of the bazaar expiation and atonement are institutionalized in many ways. The term kaffāreh is used meaning expiation

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[29]There is no conception of original sin in Islam. The Islamic view is that sins are individual acts rather than inherent wrongness in man himself.

[30]Kluckhohn relates a similar point in speaking of the Navaho. "Certain passages in the myths indicate that the Navaho have a somewhat conscious realization that the ceremonies act as a cure, not only for physical illness, but also for antisocial tendencies . . . ceremonials exist as institutionalized means of restoring the individual to full rapport with the universe: nature and his own society . . . The associated myths reinforce the patient's belief that the ceremonial will truly cure him of his illness and also 'change' him so that he will be a better man in his relations with his family and his neighbors" (1965:157).

or atonement. Religious leaders have assumed certain powers to absolve the believer of sin in the sense that if someone has done something wrong, say, has embezzled or extorted money or cheated someone in trading and his conscience bothers him, he can go before any religious leader and state the case to him. The believer is expected to make restitution but often the religious leader takes a small sum from him, as a token of his sincerity and repentance and in the name of religion can declare the remainder purified. This is known to the bazaaris as rad-i mazalem or restitution for some act of injustice or unfair action.

The ritual mourning and flagellations emphasize, in addition, that the tradesman should not become too materialistic as a result of his business activities and he must fight this tendency in society as in himself. The gatherings reinforce, sometimes explicitly, often implicitly, the proper guidelines for commercial behavior and in general the overarching framework of Islamic and Shi'a values.

> The rozeh-khani [narration] is very good for people's souls. It would prevent a lot of crimes and it will invite people to good behavior and manners and people learn about the truth of Islam during the narrations and it is very effective on people's thoughts. It prevents crimes, lying and illegal things.

## Conclusion

As a general overall comment it can be said that the Muharram mourning rituals commemorating the martyrdom of Husain are an annual salute (in the sense of honoring or exhibiting deference) to God's protection and to piety in general. The new Muslim year begins with the month of Muharram and it symbolically signifies that evil and malice can be morally overcome with God's help. It affirms the reality of Evil as a normal part of human

existence while at the same time affirming the reality of Goodness. Individuals engaged in weeping, mourning and self-flagellation seem to be purging themselves of evil and sinful behavior or intentions. They seem intent on beginning the new year as free from conflict, evil and lax behavior and thoughts as possible. The drama of Husain is not merely a mythical account of an abstract, essentially supernatural test of strength between the forces of good and the forces of evil, but is a model which becomes objectified in the recurring attempts to ease individual consciences and feelings of guilt for having deviated from God's path during the preceding year. It is a ritual whereby individuals try to pay their debts to God, to redeem, as it were, their souls.

Husain is the key to that redemption, to salvation and forgiveness. The yearly rituals in Husain's honor reaffirm the unity of the Shi'a Islamic perspective and are an implicit criticism of those forces that would divide it. In this sense, the ritual enactment of the Husain drama at the beginning of the Muslim year is an annual renewal of the principle of opposition to evil in all forms, whether it be the selfish and sinful desires within the hearts of all believers or the willful actions of non-believers intent on destroying Shi'a Islam.

## CHAPTER NINE

## A COMPARATIVE PERSPECTIVE

As developing nations, including Iran, become more secular their policies evoke a reaction from various groups and often new religio-political movements arise. Religious interest groups, religious political parties and religious communal groups and confraternities become more prominent in political activities (see, for example, Cohen 1969, especially his chapter on "The Ritualization of Political Authority" and Boissevain 1965, 1969). Individual religious and nationalist leaders and clerical groups utilize sacred symbols to mobilize the masses for nationalist struggles, and internal revolt.

In much of Asia, the Middle East and North Africa the enormous power of religious symbols to move masses of men to dangerous and self-sacrificial actions has been demonstrated over and over. Witness, for example, the Buddhist movement in South Vietnam particularly in 1963 when monks mobilized opposition to the Diem regime. The ritual self-immolation of Buddhist monks provided a most powerful symbol of protest against the Catholic-dominated government. Or more recently, President Nguyen Van Thieu has ordered authorities to arrest Buddhist monks and Catholic priests alike who make "political sermons" to "inflame the people." "Monks and priests are free to go to their pagodas and churches to conduct ceremonies and pray. But if they deliver political sermons to stir up the people, the

province chiefs should arrest them and then report to me" (quoted by Yinger 1970:411).[1] Much of Gandhi's success as a nationalist leader was also closely tied to his reputation as a Hindu saint (Mahatma or "Great Soul").

The Drama of Husain is certainly not unique in its religious expression of political views and much of the literature in anthropology bears this out. But what is lacking in the anthropological study of ritual and politics is attention to the multivocality of symbols. Most of the work published to date focuses on the reconciliation of quarreling individuals or factions through the celebration of ritual (for example, the Lugbara and the Nyakyusa) or rituals are interpreted as events which celebrate and revivify sentiments which sustain a moral order fostering unity between participants. Little attention has been paid to the differential interpretation of a common symbol system and the implications of such interpretations for particular groups in a society. The following material offers a brief glimpse at the few studies that refer to the multivocality of the symbol of Husain in a comparative perspective.

## A Comparative View of the Drama of Husain

In this section I would like to offer a brief perspective on the drama of Husain as it is portrayed and developed in other societies. We shall see that even outside the national boundaries of Iran in much different socio-political contexts the drama lends itself to manipulation by groups that have a vested interest in the differential interpretation of the symbol.

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[1]There is an enormous literature on Buddhism, especially in relation to social change. See, for example, Obeyesekere 1972, Ames 1963a 1963b; Wriggens 1960. For a comprehensive treatment of various kinds of religious movements most of which are in response to imperialism or conquest see Lanternari 1963 and LaBarre 1971.

Lebanon

In 1956 Emrys Peters published a sociological interpretation of the passion play of Husain as it was performed in a Lebanese Shi'a village. The village was inhabited by some 1,300 Shi's Muslims who were divided into two main groups - "those who are authorities on religion and the lay-folk who are unenlightened." The former group were in turn subdivided into two groups - Sayyids and Sheikhs. Sayyids were those who claimed direct descent from the Prophet and who were thought to possess an innate religious power to bless others. The Sheikhs, on the other hand, had achieved religious authority through their study of Shi'a doctrine and law.

> They act as witnesses, conduct marriage ceremonies, and give advice in cases of divorce. They also lead public prayers at festivals and funerals and are generally in charge of teaching religious knowledge to qualified young people (1956:177).

The religious division among villagers is reinforced by an equally sharp economic division with the Sayyids and Sheikhs being the big land-owners and the remainder of the villagers being peasant laborers or shopkeepers.

The third distinguishing criterion defining the social structure of the village is the high percentage of endogamous marriages within each of the above groups. Over 98% of the Sayyids and Sheikhs married within their own group within the village or with other like groups in other villages. Peasants or shopkeepers also had a very high percentage of marriages within the occupational or status group category although they did not necessarily marry within their own family; in fact less than half of them did so.

Peters uses this general background information in elucidating the material from the Husain ceremonies. He describes the general characteristics of the rituals, which I have done elsewhere in this dissertation. Peters

then notes that apart from the religious content of the Muharram rituals they have a political significance as well:

> The two Sheikhly candidates for mayor, who were to meet in an election a few weeks later, were particularly generous hosts [speaking of the 'Ashura ceremonies]. One even hired two Sheikhs to speak at each sitting. The guests, of course, carefully compared the hospitality offered them by their different hosts and they were quick to praise those who provided a second round of coffee or tea and added cigarettes or sweets (Ibid.: 177).

The passion play presented in the village also provided Peters with valuable insight into the social dynamics of village life. For example, the passion play is performed following a written script either composed by a local person or a variant of one of the many passion plays available in printed form. The individual actors are costumed in dress reminiscent of the period of Husain and other aspects of the play are given careful attention. Now the representatives of the Great Tradition - the Sheikhs and Sayyids - control the script, choose the costumes and rehearse the actors, "Above all, Peters states, "they cast the parts in such a way as to symbolize and reinforce the distinctions between classes and groups in the village." The parts of Husain and his followers - "the good guys" - are taken by the Sheikhs and Sayyids while the "bad guys" are portrayed by the peasants and petty traders. Again Peters notes that in real life, it is the former who "pray regularly, who tend the sick, say prayers over graves, regularize marriages and in general are the bearers of Shi'a culture. In terms of the values accepted by the village, they are good. The peasants and petty traders on the other hand, those who play the forces of evil in the drama, often in real life flout the religious rules, through ignorance if not through intentional culpability, they blaspheme, they play cards openly for money, they are lax in their prayers, they drink and so on" (ibid.: 180).

In conclusion Peters points out that the villagers saw in Husain's struggles not an effort to win the caliphate but a fight against evil. The Sayyids and Sheikhs identify themselves with the forces of good in the drama:

> In the processions, it was the peasants who punished themselves, the Sayyids and Sheikhs who looked on and mourned. And after their hollow triumph on the theatrical battlefield, the peasants learned the true nature of their moral defeat in the village square, where the eternal validity of Shi'ism and the position of the Sayyids and Sheikhs as keepers of the True way of life were announced in one stirring and symbolic recitation. The lesson could not be plainer (ibid.:180).

Fuad Khuri (1972:198-213) also briefly discusses the political importance of the drama of Husain in Lebanon, but from a somewhat different perspective than Peters.

Khuri mentions that in the Shi'a village of Ghbayri the Muharram mourning rituals had always been commemorated privately rather than in public rituals. During the 1930's, however, a man from the village returned from a pilgrimage to Karbala and arranged for public commemorative rituals. This was opposed by the older families of the community who were afraid that such a precedent might disturb the delicate relationship they, as Shi'a, had with the Sunni Muslim majority in Lebanon.

The issue of the political importance of the public nature of the Husain drama in this village is rather complicated but it boils down to the fact that the village was divided into two major factions - the old, established families and their descendents on the one hand, and on the other hand, families of newcomers who settled in the village since the 1920's. The families of the newcomers found it difficult to participate in local politics and to intermarry with the old families largely, it seems, because

the latter looked upon the former as "aliens" who would dilute the "pure blood" of the old families. In order to gain some degree of respect in the community and hence political participation the newcomers de-emphasized family ties and emphasized their piety. Their active and public demonstration of piety through the Husain drama was a way of symbolizing their unity as a single political front.

> In this sense, the celebration is the means the newcomers use to display their solidarity, absorb new settlers and most important of all, shame the local families for their indifferent concern with Shi'ism. The local families, on the other hand, have not been completely oblivious to the political significance of the open celebration of 'Ashura and have therefore continuously opposed it, but to no avail (ibid.:207).

By using their presumed piety and "Shi'aness" as a new frame of reference rather than family ties, the newcomers have become reasonably influential in the politics of the community whereas only the old families enjoyed influence in the past. It is interesting to see here an emphasis on religion as an integrative factor vis-à-vis the Sunni majority in Lebanon. This conception operates at the supra-local level while at the local level-within the village-groups are distinguished by their relative degree of piety or sincerity as Shi'a as evidenced by the public performance to the Husain rituals.

Iraq

Robert Fernea notes that the Nuri es-Said government of Iraq in the 1950's tended to discourage the public displays and ritual performances of the Shi'a

> apparently because they strengthened Shi'a feelings of opposition to the Baghdad, Sunna dominated government and also because they often become occasions for local outbreaks of violence among the participants and observers (1970:22).

Despite the attempts at suppression, the Husain rituals were by 1958 clearly important annual events in the lives of the Shi'a in Iraq as Elizabeth Fernea, in her book, Guests of the Sheik so vividly demonstrates.

India

While there are some scattered references to the drama of Hussain in other parts of the world the most interesting and important for our purposes is India in which context Barnouw (1954) discusses a Hindu festival modeled on that of the drama of Husain.

Ganapati or Ganesa is the potbellied, elephant-headed god of success and has been worshipped in parts of India for centuries. Toward the end of the nineteenth century, however, political forces promoted, for nationalistic purposes, an annual public festival in honor of Ganesa. In Poona, where the festival originated, an annual ten-day celebration is held during which statues of the god are set up throughout the city and musical programs and dramatic performances are presented. On the tenth day of the festival, there is a great procession in which all of the statues are carried through the city streets to the river where some are thrown in with much ceremony.

It is generally agreed that the first public festival of Ganesa was organized in 1893 by Bal Gangadhar Tilak, a Poona Brahman, who was perhaps the outstanding nationalist leader before Gandhi. Tilak seems to have had a number of aims in mind in developing this festival among which two are directly relevant for our purposes. First of all, he felt that a ten day festival would provide a good occasion for sermons and public lectures in which anti-British propaganda could be communicated to the masses. Secondly, such a public festival would unite the Hindu community

vis-à-vis the Muslims and provide a sense of Hindu solidarity as preparation for a nationalistic movement against the British. During that year there had been severe Hindu-Muslim clashes and Hindu nationalists further accused the British of coddling the Muslims and thereby indirectly encouraging such conflicts.

Until that time, Hindus had participated freely in the Muslim rituals of Muharram. Muslim groups would go through the community soliciting money to pay for the public celebrations and Hindus contributed and took part as well as the Muslims. After the riots Tilak urged the Hindus not to contribute to the Muslim festival but rather encouraged the development of a counterpart festival organized along similar lines. His initiative was followed up and the occasion grew in popularity.

Various groups of the city, usually representing a locality or district of the city or various clubs and associations would publicly display a statue of Ganesa and march with it in a procession on the tenth day. The local or club groups also hired entertainers and narrators as well as making other necessary arrangements for the festival celebrations in their district. Each group was required also, to register their activities with the police including the text of any songs to be sung. Permission had to be obtained also to carry the statue in procession through the streets. These censorship regulations were initially set up by the British but continued in effect untill well after independence in 1947. The processions were well organized and had a pseudo-military air about them. Barnouw notes that when he witnessed these activities in 1952 a group of some 900 uniformed members of a religiously orthodox political organization marched in the processions performing a kind of mass athletic drill (ibid.:79).

The question arises, what are the similarities between Ganesa and

Husain that the ritual performances should have a similar structure and function? Barnouw notes that Tilak consciously patterned the Ganesa festival after that of the Muharram activities. One reason for this is the similarity between the traditional Hindu practice of immersing the statue of Ganesa in water and the Muslim practice of immersing the tabuts or decorative structures representing the tombs of the martyrs at Karbala. Barnouw quotes one source to the effect that the close patterning of the Hindu festival on that of the Muharram ceremonies was done in a deliberate attempt to insult the Muslims. Whatever the truth of this, the most important reason according to Barnouw for the choice of Ganesa was the great popularity of this Hindu god which lent itself readily to a widespread, national movement. It appears to me, however, that Barnouw is overlooking perhaps the major aspect of this religious symbol - namely its multivocality and the emotional fervor which surrounds religious activities. Barnouw hints at such factors but does not develop them when he quotes one author to the effect that:

> The growing interest of students in politics, and the adoption of Ganesa as their patron God, have united to connect him closely with the nationalist movement. This is strengthened by the fact that his worship is performed by all castes and sects. The legend of his slaying the elephant-headed demon, Gajasura, is interpreted to his worshippers, who are coming to his temples in increasing numbers, as being the deliverance of the people from their national oppressor (ibid.:83).

Now it seems clear to me, given my discussion of the multivocality of the symbol of Husain, that we have much the same thing here. In Hindu legend, Ganesa the symbol of success and virtue slays the demon Gajasura and this is interpreted in political terms by certain groups in society as representing the deliverance of the people from their oppressors.

The British quickly saw the dangers of the sermons honoring Ganesa and the rapid spread of the festival throughout India. The British had censorship rules against political speech-making but were hesitant to interfere in the case of religious gatherings. In 1910, after Tilak had been imprisoned for anti-government activities, the British finally began censoring the Ganesa festival. The texts of programs and songs for all public entertainment had to be approved in advance; but the authorities were obviously looking for univocal statements of sedition rather than religious utterances extolling the triumph of Ganesa over Gajasura susceptible to multivocal interpretations.

Barnouw notes in the conclusion to this study that the celebration of the festival has continued even after independence and its primary function seems to be entertainment. He notes, though, that "political references are still made in the dramatic skits (jibes at the Congress party or at local office-holders etc.)" but that politics seems now to be a relatively unimportant function of the rituals. It is interesting in this connection to see a more recent account of the symbol of Ganesa or Ganapati. Catherine Berndt quotes an Indian columnist of 1963 to the effect that:

> The Chinese invasion provided the motif for the images of Ganapati this year, and Lord Ganapati was seen in many brave, patriotic and anti-Chinese postures (1971:97).

Berndt goes on to note that in 1965 during the India-Pakistan conflict, a comparison was made between this event and the great struggles between Rama and Ravana - with India as the modern Rama. She concludes:

> The Ganapati case shows a deity actively embroiled in current politics without losing his religious aura - if anything, the reverse. And he was (is) sustained by religious ritual on [the] one hand, [and] a 'company of believers' on the other -

> two factors that are responsible also for sustaining the Rama-Ravana contrast (ibid.:97).

## Conclusion

We can clearly see, from these few comparative examples, that the multivocality of the symbol of Husain and by extension symbols of a similar nature such as the Virgin of Guadalupe (Wolf 1965) or Ganesa in India function to transmit numerous messages to those participating in such rituals. The interpretations of the meaning of the symbols are developed in accord with the local $socio_{political}$ context and accommodate the particularistic interests of the various status groups involved in these religious activities.

# CHAPTER TEN

## CONCLUSION

In contemporary anthropology there has been a resurgence of interest in the ideational realm of culture. Increasingly, social and cultural anthropologists are studying values, norms, knowledge, philosophies, religious beliefs, sentiments, ethical principles, world views, ethos, and the like. The underlying theme which seems to unite these approaches is a common interest in the multifarious dimensions of symbolic communications (see Wolf 1964 for an excellent discussion of this trend). Since man is preeminently a conceptualizing and symbolizing animal, it seems only natural that anthropologists would devote considerable attention to the symbolic systems by which man orders and explains his social and natural world and also the role such ideological systems play in maintaining and changing man's social structures. Indeed, throughout much of the social sciences and particularly in anthropology, the question of the determinative role of ideological factors in cultural maintenance and change has been one of the most interesting, important, and yet controversial, issues. Marx and Weber both addressed themselves to this question and their somewhat differing conclusions have been fundamental in the theoretical perspectives of generations of social scientists.

In this study, I have tried to build on some of the theoretical assumptions of my predecessors and to apply these ideas to data concerning the role of religion in the lives of tradesmen in the bazaar of Tehran.

The subject matter of this dissertation makes a contribution to the study of religious belief and behavior in that it is the first full-length ethnographic account of the practice of Shi'a Islam in the Muslim world. Further, my presentation of this belief system as understood and practiced by the tradesmen of the bazaar of Tehran can be seen as an instance of the general proposition that religion is one of the foremost expressions of man's need to order his environment and experiences. This study of Shi'a Islam and more particularly, the drama of Husain has much in common with other studies of world view (Horton 1962; Ortiz 1969), symbolism (Geertz 1962; Turner 1967) and more general studies in which religious thought is approached on its own terms and analyzed as a philosophical system (e.g., Evans-Pritchard 1956; Lienhardt 1961; Kluckhohn 1949; and Burridge 1965). All of these studies, the present work included, exhibit a common concern with religion as an expression of basic human capacities - for symbolic thought, for conceptualizing experience in terms of paired opposites (good - evil, etc.) and most fundamentally, for providing one's environment and experience with order and meaning, and through this cognitive structure, a disposition to respond.

The cognitive aspects of Shi'a Islam as presented in this dissertation are concerned with knowing - with information. In all societies, as Weber postulated, man has a desire to know, to understand and to find meaning. The cognitive system provides information to individuals in a society about the supernatural world and man's relationship to it. But as Leach emphasizes, the cognitive system not only informs individuals about the universe and its workings, but also about social structure and how it should work. Shi'a Islam provides the basis of the "cognitive map" of the world of the bazaar tradesman, which structures and guides their individual and collective

experiences. Indeed, Shi'a Islam as practiced by the tradesmen of the bazaar is a communication system which emits messages with at least two meanings: on the one hand, it provides information which structures a world view and gives it meaning and order, while on the other hand, it provides commands, a push to action.

As Whorf, Sapir and others have pointed out, speech patterns embody a particular mental attitude. Words, and the context in which words are placed, represent a particular perspective on the world. The perspective is, of course, not individual but rather social and arises out of the peculiar sociohistorical situation of the group.

In a very general, abstract sense, the human mind takes a formless mass of existence, the world of nature and "objective reality" and carves out of this an essentially undifferentiated whole, a number of separate and individualized forms. The number and characteristics of these forms vary from people to people and from one time period to another and also from sub-group to sub-group within larger linguistic and language groups. Through this process of classifying, categorizing, sorting out, ordering, and evaluating a particular point of view emerges - a particular angle on reality.

Within a complex society such as Iran, each sub-cultural group determines what aspects of reality are to be isolated and from what point of view. That is, the process of carving up reality into separate domains is always dependent upon and directed by the subjective interests of each particular community. Whatever aspect of reality appears significant for a given group's hopes or anxieties, for their desires or goals, for their actions is named and given "existence." The subjective personal concerns of a population select out a wide range of phenomena those factors which are felt to be essential for their way of life.

Not only does each sub-group have its own way of classifying and ordering the world around it but the language of its members comprises an organized system which is shared and which constitutes its code. The selective meanings which the tradesmen of the bazaar give to aspects of their symbol system is a function of coding and coding is a form of behavior that is learned and shared by members of a communicating group. The tradesmen learn to look at the world around them in a particular way and this learning process is directed through the concepts, categories and labels that they have been taught. It is clear then, that every coding system represents and embodies a particular world view which has transformed the raw materials of existence into a meaningful, "interpreted" world.

The tradesmen of the bazaar constitute a distinctive status group in the urban milieu of Tehran. For the bazaar tradesman, the good life is a combination of success in trade and the progressive attainment of Islamic learning. Both wealth and religious prestige are forms of power and success, and each gives support to the other. In pursuing both wealth and religious prestige, the tradesmen plan their lives in a systematic and regular pattern.

In general, the tradesmen strive, in their daily activities, to eliminate all kinds of distracting sensual joys. They do not drink alcoholic beverages, attend movies, or dance. The more conservative even refuse to listen to music or watch television. For recreation or leisure-time activities, they attend religious gatherings and participate in ritual activities. Despite occasional lapses, the tradesmen are honest and encourage trustworthiness among their fellows. They are quite

rational and calculating (hesabi) and are careful and frugal in their monetary habits.[1] They have a strong dedication to their work which is, as I have continuously pointed out, not merely an occupation, but a way of life. They strongly believe that careful attention to religious rituals and Islamic ideals, especially helping the poor and unfortunate, brings additional wealth and success.

The ritual activities of the tradesmen are important in the economic life of the bazaar. Traditionally, and still today to a great extent as we have seen, the religious idiom regulates and guides commercial practices. The tradesmen also manipulate the letter of the law to justify practices which are not acceptable under the spirit of Islamic law. That they feel compelled to do so, is one indication of the importance of religion in their lives despite their own personal failings in living up to its intent.

The religious leaders play an important part in the economic life of the bazaar. Conflict resolution tends to be handled informally through the ulama rather than through the corrupt and time-consuming courts of law. The tradesmen also need the religious leaders to allow them to use portions of their obligatory charity to help fellow tradesmen in the event of bankruptcy.

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[1]The majority of my informants in the bazaar, when discussing other tradesmen, would often say, "Bazaaris are concerned about financial matters and this is the most important thing to them;" or "The bazaaris account for all their money and they don't waste it;" ". . . most bazaaris are sly (naqola) and they keep their wealth for themselves;" "Most of them love to save money just to look at it;" "The reason they are in a lower class is because their only goal is to get more money and collect still more money."

Attention to the ritual practices of Islam assures a tradesman tested creditworthiness in the eyes of his fellows. The more he appears pious and attends ritual ceremonies the more likely it is that others will trust him and engage in further business with him. Ritual activities promote trust and individuals who participate in such ceremonies are seen by others to be upholding the values and norms of the moral community of the bazaar. The economic importance of the bazaar to the economy of Iran is also continually reinforced to the tradesmen by the ritual activities of the asnaf, especially the mourning processions during Muharram.

A portion of each individual's income is allocated for religious activities channeled either through the obligatory charity (khoms and zakat) paid to each man's marja'al-taqlid or his representative; or is allocated directly in charitable activities such as contributing to a religious school or giving money to a poor family during Muharram. Money is also spent to finance religious festival occasions or to hold commemorative rozeh rituals. Such funds can be seen as a "ceremonial fund," to use Wolf's useful term (1966:7). The ceremonial fund is used by the individual and his household to pay back man's indebtedness for God's beneficence. He does this by engaging in religious and ritual activities felt to be pleasing to God and in accordance with his will as interpreted by religious leaders. In this process his debt is lessened by the accumulation of merit which he receives each time he does something meritorious. In addition, the very same process of repaying God is a way of paying his "costs of representation" which are the costs incurred by the individual and his household for their participation in the larger social community. In Burridge's terms:

> . . . society prescribes the attitudes and activities by which its members can pay back or redeem the debt incurred in being nurtured, made morally aware and enabled to exert and realize their potential (1969:6).

This process of repayment is a redemptive process whereby individuals seek release from obligations to other men and God. By engaging in merit-making activities the tradesmen increase their "net worth" in this world and the next, while at the same time engaging in rituals of atonement, such as the drama of Husain, to reduce their this-worldly and otherworldly demerits or "costs." Indebtedness of any kind means one is in an inferior social position; one must "eat someone's salt" and thereby be indebted. Persians in general, and tradesmen in particular, are very much concerned with "getting out from under," so to speak, and seek ways of achieving power over others. To be a skillful, adroit and clever businessman (ideally within the parameters of Islam), is the measure of a man's success and the road to the improvement of his prestige and status. But the fruits of his successful activities must be seen, known, and admired. Whenever a group ceremony takes place, on a joyous occasion or a day of mourning, the tradesmen of the bazaar vie with one another by distributing food, contributing to the building of a religious school or mosque or otherwise engage in the subtleties of status distinctions discussed in the text. Such activities are done with discretion and are generally not blatant. Those who contribute to religious charity become known in the community even though such actions may have been done secretly as enjoined by Islam. There is little that escapes the attention of members of a moral community.

Success in trade and the progressive attainment of Islamic learning have, therefore, traditionally been ways of achieving social prestige and power in society. Obviously any threat to this prestige system and the moral community of the bazaar cannot go unchallenged.

Shi'a Islam as Meaning and Order

Man needs order in his life; he cannot live without order. If we look at religious cosmologies we see that man has invariably asked and answered questions concerning the creation of original order in the world. In these cosmologies a supernatural power is usually presented as the original order-maker yet, it is clear, that order must continually be created and maintained in the mundane world as well as in the realm of cosmology. As Geertz has phrased it:

> The strange opacity of certain empirical events, the dumb senselessness of intense or inexorable pain, and the enigmatic unaccountability of gross inequity all raise the uncomfortable suspicion that perhaps the world, and hence man's life in the world, has no genuine order at all - no empirical regularity, no emotional form, no moral coherence. And the religious response to this suspicion is in each case the same: the formulation by means of symbols, of an image of such a genuine order of the world which will account for, and even celebrate, the perceived ambiguities, puzzles and paradoxes in human experience (1965:211).

Man is not only concerned, through religion, with order, but is also concerned with power - with the discovery, identification, ordering and moral relevance of different kinds of power (Burridge 1969:5). Man is concerned with the systematic ordering of power, especially powers that are seen as significantly beneficial or dangerous.

In the Shi'a Islamic view of my informants, God is not only such a power but the only and absolute power. By following a framework of divinely ordained rules man can benefit from that power; by deviating from the rules, he may bring suffering upon himself and others. The rules which govern the use and control of power form a set of moral discriminations which structure the process whereby individuals attempt to discharge their obligations to God and to other members of the community. The human condition is, therefore, seen in the Shi'a Islamic perspective of the bazaar tradesmen, as one of general indebtedness.

In the attempt to implement the Islamic moral order and to transfer ideal guidelines to everyday behavior, a system of repayment is set up by which individual tradesmen in the bazaar are expected to repay their debts to God, through social action, by living according to the moral and ethical injunctions of religion. Ritual activities form one of the primary media through which the tradesmen attempt to repay this debt. By engaging in ritual activities and through obedience to other cultural guidelines orderliness in society is fostered through mutual expectations and predictability.

On one level of analysis we can see that the drama of Husain as portrayed in myth and ritual is a form of dramatized dogmatics. There are many transcendental meanings associated with this symbol. Husain represents Goodness and Purity, he embodies the spirituality and sinlessness of the Prophet, while Yazid represents Evil, Sin and Debauchery. The ritual enactment of the drama is a symbolic protest against the injustice inflicted upon Husain, but it is also a celebration of victory; the victory of Good over Evil, of Justive over Injustice, of Spirituality

over Materialism, of the humane, kind and benevolent over the inhumane, and selfish - of believer over non-believer. The idea that through death is victory comes out very clearly in the drama - the concepts of redemption and salvation are implicit in the symbol of Husain ultimately triumphing over his adversaries, thereby giving hope to everyone who must one day face death. Man may indeed suffer the slings and arrows of outrageous fortune while on this earth, but the example of Husain and his otherworldly role as savior indicate to all who believe that there is still hope. Thus the drama of Husain incorporates an intense spiritual message. This message is concerned with ultimate questions of meaning - the fact that the highest earthly rewards do not always go to those who most closely follow the codes of society - that the just and the righteous may suffer and fail while the "ungodly" may prosper. But why do men suffer? Why is there evil in the world? Religion, or more specifically religious symbols as culturally constituted defense mechanisms (see Spiro 1965), are developed and elaborated to deal with these problems. Thus, the drama of Husain can be seen at one level of analysis as a theodicy designed to cope with the basic anxiety of man.

The term "basic anxiety" is one that I have borrowed from Karen Horney who notes that in German philosophical and religious use, the term Angst der Kreatur refers to the fact that "all of us are helpless toward forces more powerful than ourselves, such as death, illness, old age, catastrophes of nature, . . . accidents" (1937:94).[2] Basic anxiety is a universal concern of man as an existential being and reflects the unresolved struggles

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[2]In her clarification of this term, Horney includes "political events" along with the other overwhelming forces confronting man. I have deleted this from my conception since I believe such activities are part of socially induced forces and do not relate to these other existential phenomena.

of mankind. At this level the message of the basic anxiety of man is communicated through the medium of the drama of Husain and provides a common code to believers in villages, tribes, and urban areas, thereby providing a framework of common understandings in the national context of Iran as well as in the international context of other Shi'a communities in India, the Yemen, Iraq, Bahrein, or Lebanon. I do not wish to imply that belief in the symbol is common to all Iranians. I am not positing universal characteristics of Iranians or pointing to an aspect of their national character. Modern nation-states such as Iran must have, however, cultural forms or mechanisms through which the various groups composing that society can communicate and engage in formal and informal relationships with each other. There must be similar idiomatic forms in the society which structure how different groups communicate and articulate with one another. While there are obviously numerous such mechanisms in a society the one form I have particularly singled out for discussion is that of religion and the ritual activities and symbols which comprise its expression. Such symbols are mediated through cultural brokers such as members of the religious classes, darvish or itinerant narrators of the drama of Husain who travel from cities and towns to villages and tribes (see Spooner 1963 for an example of such brokerage). It is at this transcendental level, this level that attempts to cope with man's basic anxiety, that we can speak of Islam (or in this particular case, Shi'a Islam) as being universal and providing a sense of sociocultural integration to the Muslim world.

The cognitive function of the belief system of Shi'a Islam is, as we have seen in this dissertation, to provide meaning and order to the universe and society. It places everything in right perspective. Shi'a Islam offers a model of the ideal society and social relationships after which men should

pattern their own lives. In doing this, it offers a theodicy to the believer which thereby objectifies and attempts to resolve man's basic anxiety; but it also induces anxieties. Spiro made a similar point a number of years ago in discussing malevolent spirits (alus) on Ifaluk (1952). Spiro notes that "it [alus] resolves many anxieties [but] it creates a very serious one in its own right - the anxiety created by the fear of the alus itself." The anxieties which are created within Shi'a Islam center around the obvious point that few men are saints; few can live up to all the requirements of the Islamic conception of Order. In a religion of law, such as Islam, the Divine Order must inevitably lead to a sense of guilt for being unable to live up to the religious injunctions. This is especially true for traders for whom practical necessity often requires deviations from the law. As one religious leader noted:

> Of course everybody commits certain sins. Sins are different in various situations and among various people. That is, each person commits a certain kind of sin. I am not able to commit the sin of adultery, for example, but I am able to gossip. A tradesman commits a sin related to financial matters. His piety might be very strong, however, in other matters. He will say his prayers on time, fast at the right time, and go on his pilgrimage at the right time; but since his financial impulses (hesseh madigariash) are strong, he commits a sin in this field.

Indeed, it is Leach's contention that the neglect of formal structural requirements is essential if ordinary, informal social activities are to be pursued at all. Ideal, "proper" social relations cannot be formally recognized at all times; sometimes pragmatic rules must take precedence over the normative guidelines for behavior. But as Leach further argues:

> Nevertheless, if anarchy is to be avoided, the individuals who make up a society must from time to time be reminded, at least in symbol, of the underlying order that is supposed to guide their social activities. Ritual performances have this function for the partici-

> pating group as a whole; they momentarily make explicit what is otherwise a fiction (1954:16).

It is clearly recognized within Islam as a belief system that individuals are human and will therefore make decisions which are not in conformity with its ideals. Provision has therefore been made, within the system, whereby believers can atone for their failure to comply with the moral constraints and guidelines for behavior. Temptation is always implicit in the idea of choice and while any deviating choice leads to disobedience and hence Disorder, it is important to distinguish between ordinary "backsliding" and human failure to live up to certain moral imperatives on the one hand, and disobedience due to an outright rejection of the ideal conception of Order, a renunciation of that absolute truth that is believed, by the tradesmen, to pervade the universe.

Thus, in the Shi'a Islamic perspective of my bazaar informants an abstract, metaphysical distinction between Order and Disorder is recognized and internalized through the ritual and belief system of Islam but, in addition, has been tied to the practical "real" facts of everyday life in such a way that Shi'a and Sunni, traditional and modern, older generation and younger generation, male and female, Muslim and non-Muslim, bazaari and non-bazaari, believer and unbeliever, Iranian and foreigner, puritan and sensualist, and a whole host of other conceptual oppositions come to be classified as virtuous and sinful respectively.

Thus, my presentation has shown that a basic cosmological conception of Order has led to an awareness of pairs of opposites, through the multivocality of symbols, which are applicable to the transcendental realm as well as to the human sociopolitical order wherein God's commands are to be acted upon or not acted upon and possibly rejected, given the

predisposition of the actors. It might also be added that the perception of the degree of adherence to Islamic injunctions by others is a prerogative the bazaar tradesmen have assumed for themselves following their interpretation of the Islamic value to "enjoin the good and prohibit the bad." In following this injunction, believing tradesmen feel they must oppose unbelievers and evildoers by whichever means are available - be it the pen, the tongue, or the sword. Light must prevail over darkness. The former is, of course, seen by Shi'a Muslims of the bazaar as the religion of Islam while the latter is anything which is perceived to threaten the Muslim way of life as they understand it.

Shi'a Islam and Propensities for Action

At another level of analysis the drama of Husain portrays what I call "situationally-induced anxieties." These anxieties arise from man's participation in society, from, as would be said in the narration of the drama of Husain, "a perception of injustices and oppression." The views of Marx are very similar to the point I wish to make here:

> Religious suffering is at the same time an expression of real suffering and a protest against real suffering. Religion is the sign of the oppressed creature, the sentiment of a heartless world, and the soul of soulless conditions. It is the opium of the people.
>
> The abolition of religion, as the illusory happiness of men, is a demand for their real happiness. The call to abandon their illusions about their condition is a call to abandon a condition which requires illusions.
>
> . . . The immediate task is to unmask human alienation in its secular form, now that it has been unmasked in its sacred form. Thus the criticism of heaven transforms itself into the criticism of earth, the criticism of religion into the criticism of law, and the criticism of theology into the criticism of politics (Bottomore 1956:26-27).

Marx's call for the abolition of religion is not the point I wish to emphasize; rather I wish to emphasize his concern that religious phenomena are, by their very existence, an indication that there are deep-seated problems which emerge from social interaction. The nature of man and the structure of societies tends to create social problems which, although man-made, become exacerbated to such a point that they seem insoluble. This is especially true under conditions of social change.

A myth of transcendental justice such as that of the drama of Husain often can and does move the socially discontent into action as perhaps no other structural form can; but it provides only a common vision, not an organizational framework for action. A myth common to members of a society can unite people but in and of itself it does not organize them. What has made the drama of Husain so successful among bazaar tradesmen as against other status groups in society, as a rallying point of opposition to the government both in the Constitutional period and at the present time is the organizational framework of asnaf (guilds) and their association with the relatively organized structure of the ulama as discussed in Part I of this dissertation.

Thus, while the Shi'a within Iran and throughout the Muslim world make use of the same symbolic code there are different versions of the same code or perhaps, more accurately, different stances in the performance of the same ritual. These differences, so clearly seen in the various performances of the drama of Husain in Iran, Lebanon, Iraq and India, signify great disparities in the conflicting claims over resources and power in society. Therefore, a common code may be used to communicate to differing social groups a sense of unity as well as conflict, consensus

as well as disagreement. In Lebanon, for example, belief in Shi'ism provides a common code for the Shi'a vis-à-vis the Sunni Muslims and provides a sense of unity for the former in their opposition to the latter; yet within the Shi'a communities the ritual performances of the drama of Husain clearly demonstrate how different versions and interpretations of a common code can signify disparities in the conflicting claims over resources and power in the community. In Iran, where the majority of Muslims are Shi'a, there is also a common code but discrepant interpretations of the meaning of aspects of that code. Thus individuals in a complex society such as Iran are not coded to the same inputs - there is an element of shared meanings, (largely at the transcendental level of religious understanding) no doubt, but there is also an element of choice, of flexibility which provides a degree of differentiation in the system and which enables distinctive status-groups to express their individual concerns and anxieties.

## Religion as Rhetoric

In this dissertation I have viewed religion as rhetoric in the sense that it is concerned with convincing individuals of the correctness of its premises and inducing them to action. Rhetoric is the ability to persuade and one of the most potent forces accompanying persuasion is emotion. Thus, it is not merely the cognitive message, the beliefs, that have importance in religion, but it is also the affective state induced at the ritual performance. Most religious and ritual behavior, therefore, has neither strictly cognitive nor strictly affective meaning but is rather a combination of the two.

Ritual performances, such as the drama of Husain, express and manipulate, primarily through symbols, the emotions of participants. This is facilitated by the isomorphism of features or spheres of the myth and their counterparts in the real society of which the participants are a part. I refer here to those features I have discussed in the text such as nuclear family roles, sex roles and the idea of an in-group versus an out-group, be it Shi'a-Sunni, bazaari-edari, or Iranian-foreigner. Burridge discussed much the same conception in his article on the implications of Tangu myth (1967).

I have shown that the rhetorical style of the rozeh khan is exceedingly important in creating the mood of emotional involvement or what Durkheim called religious "effervescence." They myth of Husain lends itself readily to manipulation because it is a dramatic form. The very structure of the narrative, with its dramatic sequences and the movement toward a climax creates, in the participants, a predisposition to respond; they are emotionally aroused, are "pulled" in the direction the narrator wishes and the message of the narration, associated with the experiential event itself creates an aura of truthfulness that cannot be denied by the participants. The message has become real.

The religious beliefs taught in the drama of Husain are true not only because they are communicated with the authority of tradition but because the participants in the religious ritual have personally experienced their truth. Geertz speaks of a similar process whereby ethos and world view interact:

> It is the office of religious symbols, then, to link these in such a way that they mutually confirm one another. Such symbols render the world view believable and the ethos justifiable, and they do it by invoking

> each in support of the other. The world view is believable because the ethos, which grows out of it, is felt to be authoritative; the ethos is justifiable because the world view, upon which it rests, is held to be true (1968:97).

Turner also refers to a similar phenomenon, but with different terminology, when he notes that ritual symbols operate at both the ideological and sensory poles of meaning. The sensory meanings of symbols evoke gross emotions and at this pole are concentrated those "significata" that tend to arouse desires and feelings. At the ideological pole are concentrated meanings relating to the moral Order, to the principles of social organization, and to the norms and values inherent in structural relationships. According to Turner, what the ritual symbol does, is to

> effect an interchange of qualities between its ideological and sensory poles of meaning. Norms and values on the one hand, become saturated with emotion, while the gross and basic emotions become ennobled through contact with social values. The irksomeness of moral constraint is transformed into the "love of virtue" (1967:30).

The ritual drama of Husain can, following this view, be seen as a mechanism which continually converts the obligatory into the desirable. But it obviously does more than that. It is not merely a passive charter for society as Malinowski or Leach would have us believe, but a dynamic instrument for coping with the world.

Spiro is also concerned with religious belief and the relationship between ideology and activity but he phrases his concern in terms of a question: Why is it that cultural beliefs, once instituted, persist over long periods of time? (1967:71)

> I have already noted that there are two classes of experience which may provide the basis for the credibility of traditional beliefs. One class, consisting of experiences prior to the acquisition of belief [essentially childhood experiences]

> produces the perceptual set which provides the perceptual readiness to believe. The other class, consisting of experiences subsequent to acquisition, provides evidential confirmation for the truth of the belief. . . . In short, just as prior experience creates a perceptual set congenial to the acquisition of traditional beliefs, so these beliefs, once acquired, constitute a cognitive set which structures subsequent experience (ibid.:80).

In effect, what Spiro is saying is that there is set up in the cultural system an interchange between experiences in society, whether based on childhood experiences or those occurring later in life, and an individual's belief system. The belief system is made real because it is validated by real life experiences which tend to confirm it and experiences acquire legitimation because they are backed up by the truthfulness of the religious system.

The most succinct statement of these views is, however, that of Rappaport. In order to do full justice to his views, I would like to quote him in extenso:

> All that seems to be common to religious experience generally is that it is ineffable, that is to say, non-discursive.
>
> The importance of the non-discursive aspect of religious experience cannot be exaggerated. Inasmuch as the experience is non-discursive it cannot be falsified. The truth of such an experience is sufficiently demonstrated by its mere occurrence; it cannot be discredited by the discourse of the conscious mind. It happens, it is felt, and it therefore carries with it a subjective quality of truth. Since the experience is a response to the enunciation of a sacred proposition or occurs in a place or in a ritual associated with such a proposition, that the proposition partakes of the same sense of truth. In other words, ultimate sacred propositions are taken to be unquestionably true because their enunciation in ritual or in the symbols kept in holy places elicits from the faithful a non-discursive, and therefore unfalsifiable affirmation. Moreover, when this afirmation is given by participation in a public ritual, it is thereby transformed

> into a discursive statement . . . transmissible to other participants . . . Ritual, thus, not only invokes the participants private religious experiences, it provides a mechanism for translating these private experiences into messages of social import; it also provides a means for certifying these messages (1971:70).

Thus, ritual is communication. It communicates messages, symbolically expressed, of the problems of human existence as well as about aspects of the immediate structure and organization of society. But as I have indicated, myth and ritual do not reflect all aspects of the social structure; they are always selective. In the case of Shi'a myth and ritual, the drama of Husain is associated with conflict and conflict resolution centered about the problem of who should make and carry out decisions regarding public policy and the common good. In this sense it is a political problem. But why use religious symbols to express political sentiments? One answer to this question has been offered repeatedly throughout this dissertation and that is that Islam, as understood by the tradesmen of the bazaar, encompasses all aspects of one's existence including the political. A given symbol, because of its multivocal characteristics, can be interpreted by participants in a ritual as having both political and religious (i.e., transcendental) significata at one and the same time - they may be inseparable. Indeed, to the tradesmen they are inseparable.

A second answer to this question focuses on the problem of why symbols exist at all. Why has man invented cultural traits that stand for or represent something else? Why is it sometimes necessary or desirable to express sentiments, feelings, hopes, fears and other behavioral traits indirectly? A full answer to these questions is beyond the scope of this dissertation and would involve all areas of expressive culture. I am reminded here of the response of a famous artist who, when asked "what's

the meaning of that painting?" said, "If I could tell you the meaning of it I wouldn't have to paint it!" All areas of expressive culture involve the problem of the correspondence of the symbolic message to sociopsychological reality and the drama of Husain is no exception.

Perhaps the two chief reasons for a political message to be sheathed in a religious, symbolic code are disguise and the increase of emotional impact. It has long been recognized that one of the most important functions of certain areas of expressive culture such as folklore, folksongs and religion is their role as vehicles of social protest. Throughout history wherever there has been injustice and oppression individuals have sought not only solace but often also a unifying message in folksongs, jokes, proverbs, trickster tales, and religious symbols. June Nash reports, for instance, that the Christian Passion Play in Maya Indian communities is used as a vehicle for expressing indigenous social themes, especially that portraying the dominant Ladino group as oppressor and an imagined victory by the Indians over their masters (1968). In European fairy tales deriving largely from the Middle Ages, rich, aristocratic kings are often defeated by poor, deserving peasants who succeed in taking the king's land and riches for themselves. One advantage to protests of this type is that the blame for its composition cannot be fixed to any one person; it is a collective rather than an individual expression. The multivocality of religious symbols permits the same kind of expression since no direct references are made to the present circumstances, only the "proper" understanding of the codes being used enable the participants to decode a political message relevant to present events and personalities.

The reason for the use of disguise in communicating political messages in Iran is because of ubiquitous censorship and the oppression of opponents to the regime and its policies. There is strong military might and an effective security network at the disposal of the government. The government also controls the mass media. The tradesmen and other opponents of the government are extremely realistic about their power to oppose the government and avoid, for the most part, open confrontations with these forces. On the other hand, about the only channel of communication still open to the people is religious rituals; although as I have noted, the government has its internal security forces at these gatherings as well. Because of these factors - this "sense of blockage," of the "insufficiency of ordinary action" - the multivocality of religious symbols is resorted to in order to communicate to the people a message of dissatisfaction and opposition.

In addtion, religious symbolism is important because it provides individuals with a perspective on and a way of talking about what cannot easily be summarized from a set of observations. In symbolizing, individuals not only see that certain things are as they are but also see them as significant of the interconnections between events, processes, thoughts and actions which somehow constitute their world. In other words, the symbols present an overall context in which the concrete actions of individuals can be placed, understood, and judged. Thus, a further reason why the bazaar tradesmen do not convey their political arguments more directly but rather channel them through religious symbols seems to be because these beliefs mean so much to the tradesmen as intellectual tools for making sense of the world. These beliefs are powerful instruments in the hands of the narrators and others who would manipulate them for political purposes.

The tradesmen themselves also organize and participate in these rituals and voluntarily submit to manipulation because they share the political sentiments of those ulama who direct the ritual activities. What is being manipulated are not merely ideas - not merely the drama of Husain - but also the tradesmen's dependence on these beliefs as a means of ordering, explaining, predicting and controlling their world. But ritual behavior not only has a cognitive message but also an affective one and it is the interdependence of what Geertz has labeled "world view" and "ethos" that gives the religious idiom such power in communicating political messages. Symbolism is used, at times, for its emotional force. The material presented earlier and throughout this dissertation by Geertz, Rappaport, Turner and Spiro all point to the importance of looking at the affective dimension of behavior in its interaction with the cognitive dimension thereby relating ideology and activity.

The drama of Husain copes with basic anxieties and situationally-induced anxieties at one and the same time. For the participants there is much hope and many promises in the ritual. The drama of Husain not only inspires private religious experiences but also provides a mechanism by means of which these private experiences can be translated into messages of greater social importance and further provides the means for certifying the truthfulness of these messages. The drama of Husain shows how an individual's personal concerns are generalized and related to the grand truths postulated by his culture and conversely, how the grand doctrine of the religion is made particular to his own concerns so that he may use it as a model. Thus, he is not alone; his troubles and fears are assuaged by being shared, his choices laid out for him with the highest sanction (see Mandelbaum 1964:6).

In conclusion, perhaps it can be said that ritual, as I have viewed it in this study, is a particular kind of performance symbolic of values and ideas which, through a coalescence of factors - cognitive, affective and conative - find their best expression under the prevailing cultural conditions in this structural form.

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